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McCLURE'S

December 1923

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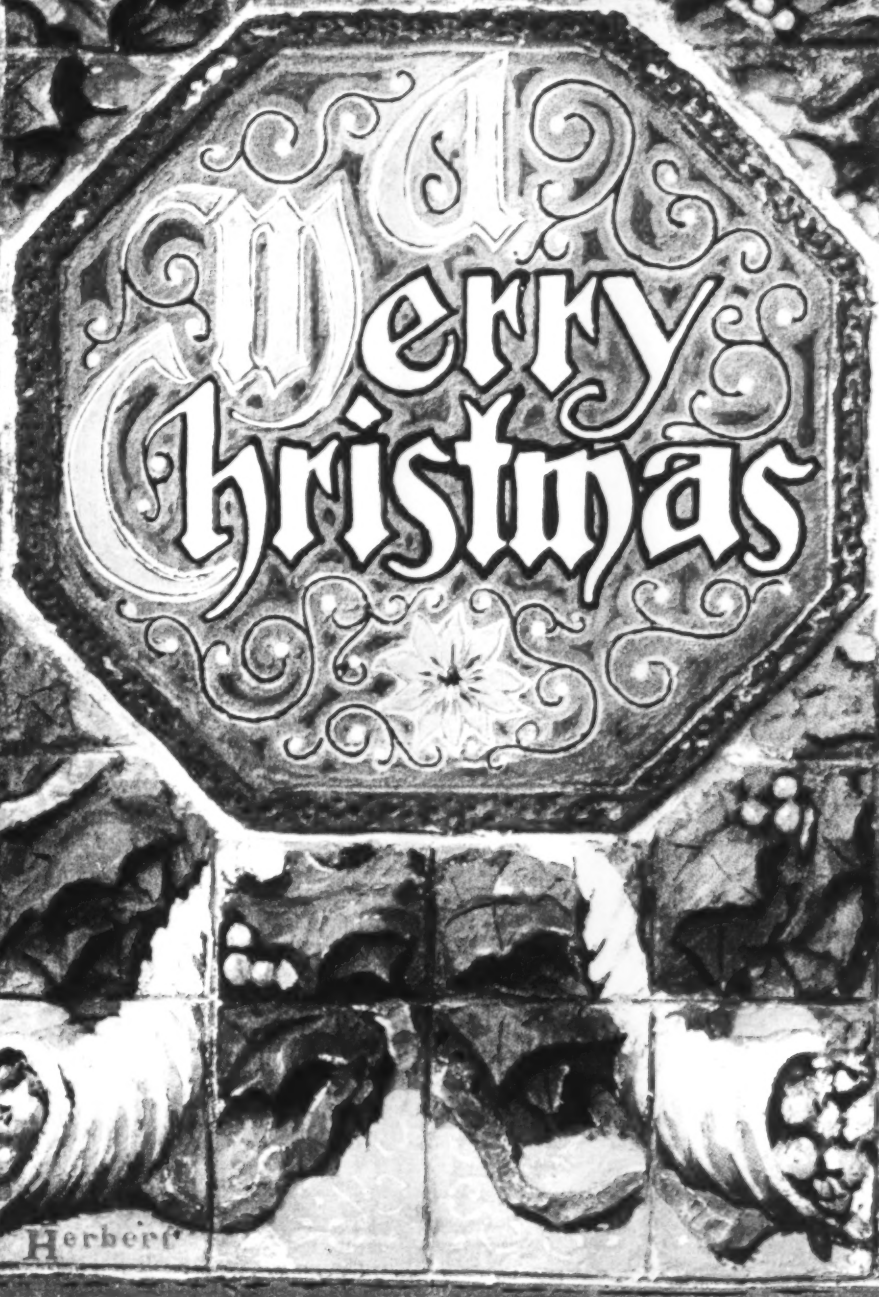

F. W. Woolworth's Own Story of His Start in Life

"TO THE QUEEN'S TASTE"

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Volume 55 Number 10

McCLURE'S MAGAZINE

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McCLURE PUBLISHING COMPANY, 76-88 Lafayette Street, New York

For Oil, Gas or Electricity

A jury of eleven artists—sculptors, craftsmen, painters and critics—picked this, the design of Miss Mary Bishop, as the lamp combining the most beautiful proportions, harmonious tones and practicable design of all those at the Art Alliance of America's exhibition of 1923.

The base is cast in Medallium of rich, statuary bronze finish, which not only allows the artist's delicately refined contours and gracefully proportioned masses to be faithfully preserved in their charming simplicity, but also insures their permanency. The shade, designed as a unit with the lamp, is in tones of grey-gold-brown graded into ivory-brown—chosen by Miss Bishop to carry her scheme of color harmony—with deep, rich, brown stripes toward the bottom of the flare, and edges bound with strips of dull brass. The whole lamp stands 16½ inches high to top of shade; the shade is 13 inches in diameter.

Why the Decorative Arts League Paid $2,500 for this Lamp in order to sell Replicas of it for only $5.90

WEARIED with the drab commonplaces offered by lamp manufacturers, with their ill-proportioned, unbalanced designs and garish colors—particularly with those few poor specimens adapted for burning oil—the Decorative Arts League determined to procure, for reproduction, the most beautifully designed, harmoniously colored table lamp, adaptable for either oil or gas, as well as electricity, that the best artistic talent in America could produce, cost what it would.

The assistance of the Art Alliance of America was enlisted and a great national competition arranged. Cash awards of $1,300 were offered, and eleven eminent artists and critics selected by the Art Alliance to act as as jury.

Over 250 Artists entered the competition, from 26 different states and provinces. 307 different designs were submitted. Though all were beautiful, many of them surpassingly so, the final verdict went unanimously to the lamp of Miss Mary Bishop (illustrated above), and she received the Blue Ribbon and Grand Prize of $600.00.

$2,500 for One Lamp

Thus was secured for the League, at a total expense of something over $2,500, the one design for a table lamp unmistakably supreme for its purpose.

And this, the Blue Ribbon Lamp, each one bearing the artist's signature, is now offered for a limited time by the League to those who appreciate the possession of such artistic things.

Price—the Most Amazing Point of All

The price of the Mary Bishop Lamp, like that of all articles offered by the League, is actually less than is asked in stores for even the commonplace factory designs of similar type. It is $5.90. Look about you in the stores and see how pitiably little you can get for even twice or three times that amount, and then think that now, through the League's plan, you can for merely $5.90, have for your home the lamp on which a jury of the most discriminating judges of art conferred the Blue Ribbon.

That is the League's purpose—to prove that the most substantial and artistic things need cost no more than drab commonplaces if the right methods of production and distribution are used.

The League is able to operate on such small prices because it has a "corresponding membership" of people who have not only said, but proved by their purchases that they are interested in hearing about beautiful things for home decoration. Such membership costs nothing and involves no obligations. You make purchases of articles offered only as they particularly appeal to you personally. But it brings you many opportunities to know about art objects for the home that you would never otherwise hear of, and to buy them if you wish at prices you could not otherwise equal. For most of the League's offerings are never advertised to the public. Only about once a year some especially great triumph, like Aurora, or this Mary Bishop Prize Lamp, is publicly announced, and then only for the purpose of widening the corresponding membership to include a few more discerning people.

Sent You On Approval

All League products are sold strictly subject to the purchaser's approval. All you need to do is to sign and mail the coupon. When the lamp comes you pay the postman $5.90, plus the postage. You then take five days to see the lamp lighted, to study its effect. If by that time you have not decided that you never before made so good a purchase, you return the lamp to us and all your money will be refunded in full. That is the League's way of doing business. Send the coupon now, for it might be months, or years, before you see another announcement of the League. So sign and mail this coupon, now—without risk.

DECORATIVE ARTS LEAGUE, Gallery at 505 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y.

You may enter my name as a "Corresponding Member" of the Decorative Arts League, it being distinctly understood that such membership is to cost me nothing, either now or later, and it is to entail no obligation of any kind. It simply registers me as one interested in hearing of really artistic new things for home decoration and use.

You may send me, at the member's special price, a Mary Bishop Prize Lamp, and I will pay the postman $5.90 plus the postage, when delivered. If not satisfactory I can return the lamp within five days of receipt and you are to refund my money in full.

Check whether

Gas - - - ☐

Oil - - - ☐

Electricity ☐

MC-3

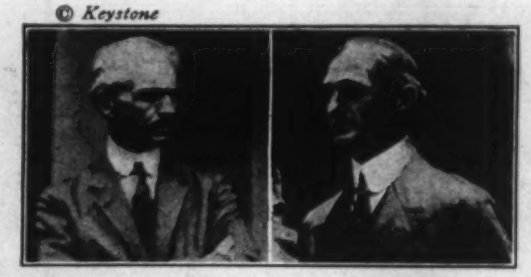
Signed.....

Street or R. F. D......

City.....*State*.....

What Is Coming!

Some Future Features of McClure's



© Keystone

Another of Major Russell's Secret Service Stories

"THE Counterfeiters" (illustrated below), concerns an international woman crook and her gang, who matched their wits against Major C. E. Russell, of the A. E. F. Secret Service, led him a thrilling and futile chase over half of France, and finally left in his hands the making of a gripping real-life detective story.

Ford or McAdoo for the South?

"WHAT the South is Thinking," by George F. Milton, Jr., is a sharply informative analysis of present political and economic affairs south of Mason and Dixon's line. "The last few weeks," Mr. Milton writes, "have seen the weakening of the Ford Presidential boom in the South, a stronger demand for McAdoo as Democratic candidate, and a revival of hope for industrial development at Muscle Shoals." Here is a *news feature* of vital interest to every well-informed man.

Red to the Right

AN action story—by the always popular H. Bedford-Jones—of stormy tempers, blustering weather and fiery love, in which a young business man and an elder captain of finance fight it out for a girl's happiness through a day and night of gale on the Great Lakes.

A Fugitive by Air

MAJOR "TOM" VIGORS—author of "The Baby and the Spy" in this issue—describes in a forthcoming issue of McCLURE's the aerial rescue from German clutches (see illustration at right) of a noted British intelligence officer.

The Man Who Knew How

IF you were trapped in a Canadian blizzard and took refuge in a snowed-up cabin; and if you had only a few safety matches left with no box to strike them on—what would you do?

Allanson Shaw has chosen this situation as the culminating episode in a thrilling tale of outdoor adventure that is one of eight powerful short stories in the January issue of McCLURE's.

Tigers of the Sea

DO you know what a sailfish is? Some of the most amazing pictures of leaping fish ever taken illustrate an absorbing article in next month's McCLURE's by Hamilton Wright, describing the man-killing game fish of Florida waters. The article will quicken the pulse of every lover of sport and nature.

© Dimock *A Leaping Tarpon*

Mussolini Talks to Crowther

IS Mussolini a phenomenon on the order of Napoleon, or is he merely a lucky demagogue who has attained power on a fluke? "Italy is the only nation in Europe on the up-grade today," writes Samuel Crowther, "and Mussolini is the only European premier who has real constructive ability."

America's eyes are drawn perforce to Europe again by the seething spectacle of new national aims and dissensions that are rising there. Samuel Crowther, expert journalist, just back from a prolonged trip through Italy, writes in the next McCLURE's a brilliant story of the New Italy, and explains the real significance of the dramatic reign of Mussolini and his Fascisti.

Benito Mussolini © P. & A.

Seven Arresting News Features and Eight Novel Short Stories in the January McClure's

Saving the money that slipped through their fingers

How an investment of $2.50 grew to $7,000 in seven years without speculation

By Arthur H. Patterson

MR. AND MRS. B. live in Connecticut. He is a clerk in the office of a manufacturing plant. They have been married ten years, and for the first three years of their married life they not only failed to save but actually went in debt over $400. They now have two children, own a comfortable cottage home which is appraised at $5,000 and is clear and free. They have savings-bank accounts of $800 and $1,200 invested in 7% preferred securities. And every dollar of this money has been saved from salary during the past seven years, an average of $1,000 per year.

I am going to tell you their story, or rather let Mr. B. tell it as he related it to me. If you are facing the crisis in your affairs which the B.'s faced in those early days of married life, it may help you to meet it and come off victorious.

Listen to what Mr. B. says:

"I am now 37 years of age; married and the Daddy of two children. When I was married I had exactly $750 on hand in cash, inherited from my father's estate. Up to that time I never saved a nickel and if this money hadn't come as a windfall, we could not have been married. I held a good position and was earning $2,500 a year. That was in 1915. For the next three years Jane and I just let things run along, living comfortably on my salary. The $750 which I inherited went for furniture and home needs and we did manage to buy—on the spur of early married ambition, perhaps—$300 more of furniture which we paid for out of my salary. But all the rest of it went for clothing, rent, food, amusement, books, cigars, etc. We spent it as it came and it was always a race between our cash and our bills to see which would be on top at the end of the month. Usually the cash lost. But the bills didn't press or worry me. I ran accounts with tradesmen who knew me and knew I was good for it. But gradually the bills distanced the cash and at the end of three years I was in a hole just $400; and then the situation grew serious because we had a baby and in order to pay the emergency bills of the occasion, I had to let my other creditors wait and they became restless.

"Jane and I had tried time and time again to live within my salary and save a few dollars, but it wasn't any use. We lacked the backbone somehow and didn't have the necessary system to help us see it through. One day I came across a remark made by James Hill, the railroad builder, and it set me thinking. It burned itself into my brain. It was this:

"*'If you want to know whether you are going to be a success or failure in life, you can easily find out. The test is simple and infallible. Are you able to save money? If not, drop out. You will fail as sure as you live. You may not think so, but you will. The seed of success is not in you.'*

"I went home and that evening Jane and I had a long heart-to-heart talk. We sat up until one o'clock, studying, planning, debating, wondering how we could change our shiftless, easy-going habits so that we could feel that we were going to be classified with the successful ones and not the failures.

"We made up our minds that from that night on not a penny would be spent for other than bare necessities until every debt had been paid. We resolved to live on half my salary, reasoning that if other people whom we knew could live respectably on $1,250, there was no reason why we shouldn't. Then Jane said: 'We ought to keep a cash account and put down just where the money goes. We can't go by guesswork any longer. We've been living that way for three years. We'll begin now to keep a record of our money.'

"What Jane said brought to my mind an advertisement which I had seen only a few days before, about an Expense Book for family accounts. So I got the magazine and found the ad. It told about the Economy Expense Book for personal and household accounting. The description told me that it was exactly the thing we needed and before going to bed I wrote a letter ordering a copy. In a few days it came, and Jane and I had an interesting session studying it and entering the Cash and Expenditure Items which we had been keeping tab of since the midnight resolution.

"That book taught us something about the science of home economics. We learned, for instance, that in a properly arranged budget a man earning the salary I did could save, without stinting, at least 30% of his salary. But we were beating that figure. We had raised the ante to 50%, and that without suffering for a single need. Of course, we had cut out the theatre, the cigars, the expensive lunches and we'd begun to get acquainted with some of our discarded clothes all over again. And I learned that rent consumed in the balanced budget 25% (which was about our cost); food was 26½% and we cut it to 22½%; clothes 20%—we chopped to 8% that first year, and it never rose over 12% the first four years.

"We started on the new system in April, 1919. The following April, when we balanced the books for the first year we found this result: Every single bill paid and $500 in the savings bank! Glorious! We were out of the woods and for the first time in my entire business career I had visions of success on which I could actually stand without breaking through into the quicksands of despair. We celebrated that night in good style with a dinner and the theatre, and that's become part of the program ever since—the annual dinner of the board of directors, Jane calls it.

"The rest is easy. We were on the right track, and once started nothing could turn us back.

"We stuck right to the original program for three years, living on half my salary and saving the other half. Then I got a raise of $250 and that made it quite a bit easier. A year ago I got another raise, bringing my salary up to $3,000, where it now stands.

"I've never had the least trouble, since starting on the first page of my first copy of Woolson's Economy Expense Book, in living within my income and saving money.

"That book brought us, not only independence, but it changed me from a worried, half-baked existence into a self-respecting, successful man. I am in a position, as the result of our joint efforts, where I need look to no man for favors; and further than that, my success has brought us into a circle of friends, both business and social, who value us because we are looked upon in our town as 'worth while,' and 'the sort who are getting ahead.'"

* * * * * * *

Woolson's Economy Expense Book is designed to keep track of the income and expenses of the average family in a systematic manner. Each book is made to contain the records of four consecutive years.

No knowledge of bookkeeping or accounting is necessary to properly keep a Woolson Book. The lifetime experience of an expert accountant is in the book. He devised it for his own household and planned it so his wife could keep it.

Two minutes daily is sufficient to keep it written up to date. At the end of each week and month and year you not only know where every penny went, but you will have an analysis and comparative table of all the various expenditures, showing just what it went for. Every detail of money management is provided for by a simple, easy system that a twelve-year-old child could handle.

This book has proved truly a godsend to thousands because it has taught them a sure way to manage their finances. With it you know every minute just where you are money-wise. It automatically shows every penny of income and outgo; just how much for groceries, dress, rent, medicine, amusement, car-fare, etc.—and all this instantly and plainly. It is not complicated or tiresome. In fact, once you have started keeping a Woolson Book you will find it fascinating as a game and a miser for saving money.

Woolson's Economy Expense Book is bound in dark green, semi-flexible, morocco fabrikoid. In the front of the book you will find a wealth of ideas on budgets and saving money. Its rich green binding makes it an attractive addition to the library table. Remember the book lasts for four years. This means that you spend a trifle over one penny per week for your accounting system. Sign the coupon below. You need send no money, unless you prefer. Send the order in and pay the postman, when he delivers the book, $2.50, plus slight charges for postage. (If you prefer to send $2.50 with the coupon, we will pay the postage.) Remember the book is absolutely on approval. If, at the end of five days, you prefer to return the book, you may do so, and we will return you your money.

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Send me Woolson's Economy Expense Book. I agree to pay postman $2.50 and postage. If I do not care to keep the book, I am to return it within five days and you will refund my money without question.
N. B.—If you send cash with order we will pay postage.

Name.....

Street Address.....

City or Town.....State.....

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The Latest Photograph of Woolworth's "Cathedral of Commerce"

MONUMENT to a business that Frank W. Woolworth started in 1879 with $315 in borrowed money, New York's $13,000,000 Woolworth Building represents an architect's dream of beauty in stone and a great merchant's vision of success through service.

In his remarkable autobiography, unpublished for years and now printed in McCLURE'S, F.W.Woolworth wrote that he believed his work had notably helped to counteract rising costs of living in America.

Built with the dimes of the people, symbolic of vast savings effected through a new idea in merchandising, the colossal Woolworth Building has been for ten years the tallest, most beautiful and most famous office building in the world.

The central portion of this huge Gothic pile rises 792 feet above Broadway. There are 4,000 offices in the building, and some 50,000 persons pass every business day within its walls.

VOLUME 55
No. 10

McCLURE'S MAGAZINE
S. S. McCLURE, *Editor*
KENNETH W. PAYNE, *Managing Editor*

DECEMBER
1923

One of the Most Dramatic Life Stories in Business Achievement

From Dimes to Millions

Being the Recently Discovered Portion of an Unpublished Autobiography

By Frank W. Woolworth

Creator of the 5 and 10 Cent Stores

IN the winter of 1872-3, at the age of twenty-one, I suddenly realized that the time had come to make a start in life. So far, I had grown up without any plan or purpose. I lived with my family on a farm about a mile from the village of Great Bend, in Jefferson County, New York. Times were hard, and about all my father had accumulated was a mortgage on the farm, together with other debts. I detested farm work, and could not see any future ahead of me there. But how to go about building up a future elsewhere I did not know. Still, I felt that if I could get a position in some store it would be a step in the right direction.

So one day, when the snow lay deep in the road and the air was biting, I hooked the old mare into the cutter and drove to the village of Carthage, which lay about four miles east of Great Bend. I tied the mare to a hitching rail and set forth resolved to get a job. I didn't care what sort of job it might be, or what the wages were. All I wanted was a foothold somewhere.

© *Keystone*

In the Woolworth Building lobby is this grotesque of F. W. Woolworth counting out dimes to pay for the structure

At that time Carthage had a population of about 1500. There were several grocery stores, a hardware store or two, a drygoods store, a meat market, and a furniture and undertaking shop. I tried them all. At every place I offered my services as a clerk, but every place refused me.

I drove back home in deep discouragement. The world didn't seem to have any niche for me. For the time being I accepted defeat, and shortly afterward hired out on my uncle's farm at eighteen dollars a month.

Not long after this, however, there came a most unexpected rift in the clouds. I had told something of my ambition to Daniel McNeil, who ran a country store at Great Bend, and one day when I happened to be in the store he offered me a place as clerk—without any pay except my board and lodging. But he was willing that I should consider it merely a temporary expedient, to help me along until something better turned up.

McNeil himself helped me turn up something better. He was in the habit of making frequent visits to Watertown, about twelve miles away, and on these trips he spoke to the merchants there about me and tried to get me a job. Watertown then had about 10,000 people and was quite a metropolis in our part of the country.

Finally, on his return from one of these periodic visits, McNeil told me there might be an opening at the drygoods store of Augsbury & Moore, one of the largest in Watertown, and he offered to give me a note of introduction to Mr. Augsbury.

Next morning I was up early, went out home and hitched up the old mare again to the cutter—for it was still wintry—and drove to Watertown. It was a hard pull for the old horse, but I reached my destination about noon and lost no time in going to the establishment of Augsbury & Moore, only to learn that Mr. Augsbury was at his home, sick.

HOWEVER, I was determined to get that job, so, after pondering the matter for a time as I walked the streets of Watertown, I screwed up my courage and inquired my way to Mr. Augsbury's home.

I found him not seriously ill, and after he had read my note of introduction, he measured me with his eyes for a minute, and then he said to me, without much

evidence of respect: "Well, bub, so you want a job in the store, do you?"

After a little conversation, he wrote a note to his partner, Mr. Moore, and told me to go down to see him right away.

I went, joyfully enough; but when I ran up against Moore some of the joy was taken out of me. As the saying is, it looked as if I had gone up against the real thing. He was very much of a dandy, wore side-whiskers, and dressed in the height of fashion. On the other hand, I was a tall, lanky country boy, and my appearance was not calculated to arouse enthusiasm in this exquisite young man.

However, he could not very well ignore the note from his partner, so he proceeded to haul me over the coals. He asked me a lot of questions as to what I knew about the drygoods business, about clerking, and about things in general. I knew practically nothing. It took him only a minute to discover my unfitness.

"How much tuition can you pay for coming in here and taking lessons?" he asked.

This was pretty nearly a knock-out, but I rallied and managed to say that I didn't have any money, and that even if I had money, I didn't think I'd want to spend it for the privilege of working for anybody. I expected to be of some value to the store.

He replied that he didn't think I could be of any service to the store of Augsbury & Moore, but that if I wanted to come in there and work for nothing the first year, they might perhaps give me a chance.

This, too, was impossible. I told him so. I already had a better job than that, for while I was working for nothing so far as money was concerned, I got my meals and bed up at Great Bend.

While Moore was having quite a lot of fun with me, Augsbury himself came in, having decided that he was well enough to come down and see how I was getting on with his partner. Then both of them proceeded to grill me. I realized then that I was of small consequence and knew mighty little about anything—and nothing at all about clerking in a drygoods store.

It developed, however, that these two men were not as hard-hearted as they had led me to believe. It was finally agreed that I should work for nothing for the first three months, after which I was to receive a salary of $3.50 a week. I was to board myself.

With a great deal of relief, I drove home that afternoon and a few days later, on the morning of March 24, 1873, left home to begin my labors. I might have gone to Watertown by train, but the fare was thirty-three cents and it looked pretty big to me. So father said he would take down a load of potatoes on the sleigh, and I could go with him.

It was a sad morning for my mother. She felt just as most mothers feel, I suppose, when their boys leave home to begin the fight with the world. She believed that I was going away for good, and I remember how she looked as she stood in the doorway watching me ride off on that load of potatoes. I waved my hand to her as long as I could see her, feeling pretty quiet and sober myself.

I reported at the store on time and walked behind the counter with my hat on, ready for business.

"Take off that hat!" commanded Moore. "And you ought to wear a necktie and try to look respectable!"

This was not an auspicious start, but I did what he told me, took off my hat, and resolved to wear a necktie next day and thereafter. While I was standing around in the store, looking at things, a farmer came in and asked for some No. 4 thread. It didn't occur to me that I was there to sell goods so I paid no attention to the man until Moore called to me from his desk:

"Frank, why don't you wait on that customer?"

Then I began to look for thread, but couldn't find it. The farmer grew impatient and I grew "rattled," and finally another clerk—a Mrs. Coons—came to my rescue.

IN spite of these troublesome beginnings, I got along fairly well and managed to stick in the store for two and a half years. In six months my wages were raised to $4 a week, in a year to $4.50, and finally to $6. When I actually attained an income of a dollar a day, I felt that I was indeed on the highway to success.

In the meantime Mr. Augsbury sold out his interest in the store to Perry R. Smith, and the firm became Moore & Smith. Mr. Smith was a young man not far from my own age.

My place was in the back of the store, where I worked from seven in the morning until nine at night. I was not accustomed to such confinement, and it told on me physically. My health became impaired, but I kept on at the work.

In the fall of 1875 a very unexpected thing happened to me. Somehow or other a Watertown merchant named A. Bushnell got it into his head that I was a star drygoods salesman. He sent for me one day and astounded me by offering me $10 a week to work for him.

THE enormous Woolworth business and the magnificent Woolworth Building in New York City are not merely monuments to the persistence of one man. They are monuments as well to the profitable businesses which he helped countless other men to build as by-products of his own success.

You will find arresting glimpses of their significance in Frank W. Woolworth's own story of his start in life—which McCLURE'S is able to publish this month—a fragment of the unpublished autobiography upon which he was working in collaboration with Edward Mott Woolley when death terminated his labors.

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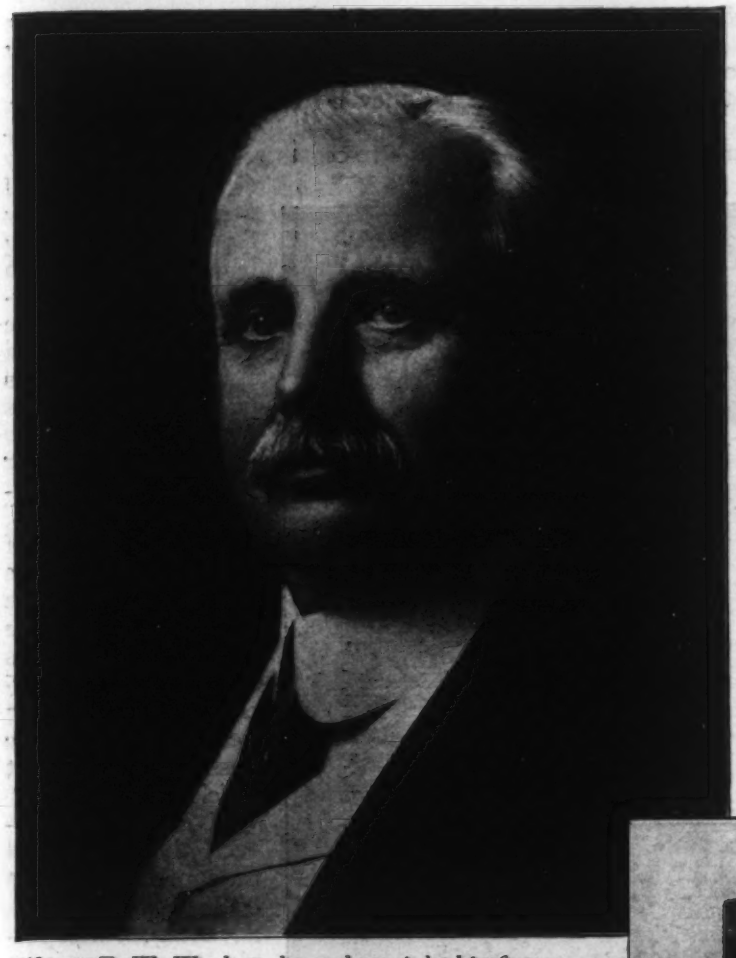
Grotesque of Cass Gilbert, architect of the Woolworth Building



Above, F. W. Woolworth, and at right his first successful store, opened in June, 1879, at Lancaster, Pa., where he took in $127 the first day

Of course Moore & Smith did not regard me as worth this fabulous wage, so I quit them and went to Bushnell's.

At heart, however I didn't consider myself worth so much money. In fact, I didn't consider myself a success at all as a salesman. I didn't believe I had it in me to sell goods.

IN a little while Bushnell woke up to the fact that he had bought a sort of "lemon." One day he called me down cellar, and in the darkness and solitude gave me a nice little heart talk. He finished by saying that he would have to cut my pay to $8 a week.

Realizing my limitations, I accepted this decree with proper humility, and worked just as hard for $8 as I had for $10. I worked too hard, in fact, for very shortly I was taken ill and had to go home to the farm.

I was sick for about a year, much of the time confined to the house. It was a very discouraging period, and my prospects of ever becoming a merchant seemed to fade away. But gradually I recovered my health, and was well again when the summer of 1876 came around. It was then that I was married to a Watertown girl. Like most young men who marry, I gave little heed to financial matters, nor considered in what manner I could support a family.

When I really faced the problem, it loomed up very big and serious. A farm seemed to be the only way out, so I bought a small piece of land near Great Bend, and my wife and I settled down in a little house to raise chickens and garden truck. I was now twenty-four years old and was back almost where I had started three years before. About the only difference was that now I owed quite a bit of money for my farm and had a household to support.

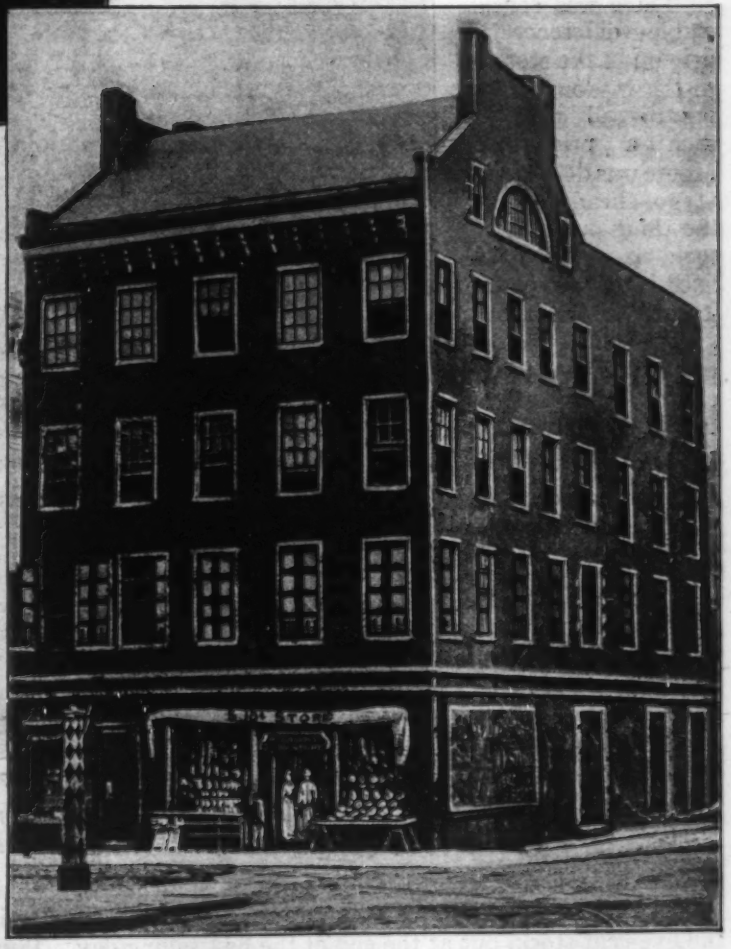
Still, I started off to make a living in pretty good spirits and was getting down to business with my chickens, when one day I received a letter from my old employer, W. H. Moore, asking me to come to Watertown to see him. My wife and I discussed the advisability of risking thirty-three cents in railroad fare. She advised me to take the chance. So I dressed up in my other clothes and went.

TO my great surprise, Moore offered me $10 a week to come into the store. I learned afterward that he had been having a lot of trouble to get the right kind of clerks. He felt that I, at least, was dependable, even if not a brilliant salesman.

Here was a rather complicated problem for me, as problems went in those days. What could I do with my little truck farm if I took that job?

My wife settled it by declaring that she would take care of the farm if I would take care of the job. So, with many misgivings and regrets over leaving her alone, I finally submitted to the arrangement and took up my abode once more in a boarding house at Watertown.

Photos from Brown Bros.



I was now put in the front of Moore & Smith's store, and became an individual of some importance in the local drygoods field. Once every two weeks, on Saturday night, I deposited thirty-three cents on the ticket counter in Watertown and went home to spend Sunday. Thus the summer of 1877 passed. When the winter approached we had a chance to trade our chickens for a second-hand sewing machine, and we seized the opportunity. Then

we rented the farm, and moved our meager household possessions to Watertown.

The business of Moore & Smith was not very successful at that time and in 1878 Mr. Moore informed me that he would have to cut my pay to $8.50 a week. This was a serious blow, and necessitated considerable financial retrenchment in my plane of living. Still, we could live on $8.50 a week if we had to—and we did. You can imagine that there were not any frills on our expense bills.

In August of that same year Mr. Moore made his customary buying trip to New York, and while he was there had his attention called to some goods that could be retailed at five cents. This put an idea into his head, and when he got home he told me that he had bought quite a stock of these five-cent goods.

There was considerable difference of opinion in the store as to the wisdom of trying to sell goods at such a price, but Moore was determined to go ahead and try the thing out. So we took an old counter, fixed it up, and placed it in the center aisle.

When the goods arrived and were unpacked, we placed them on this counter and put up a placard:

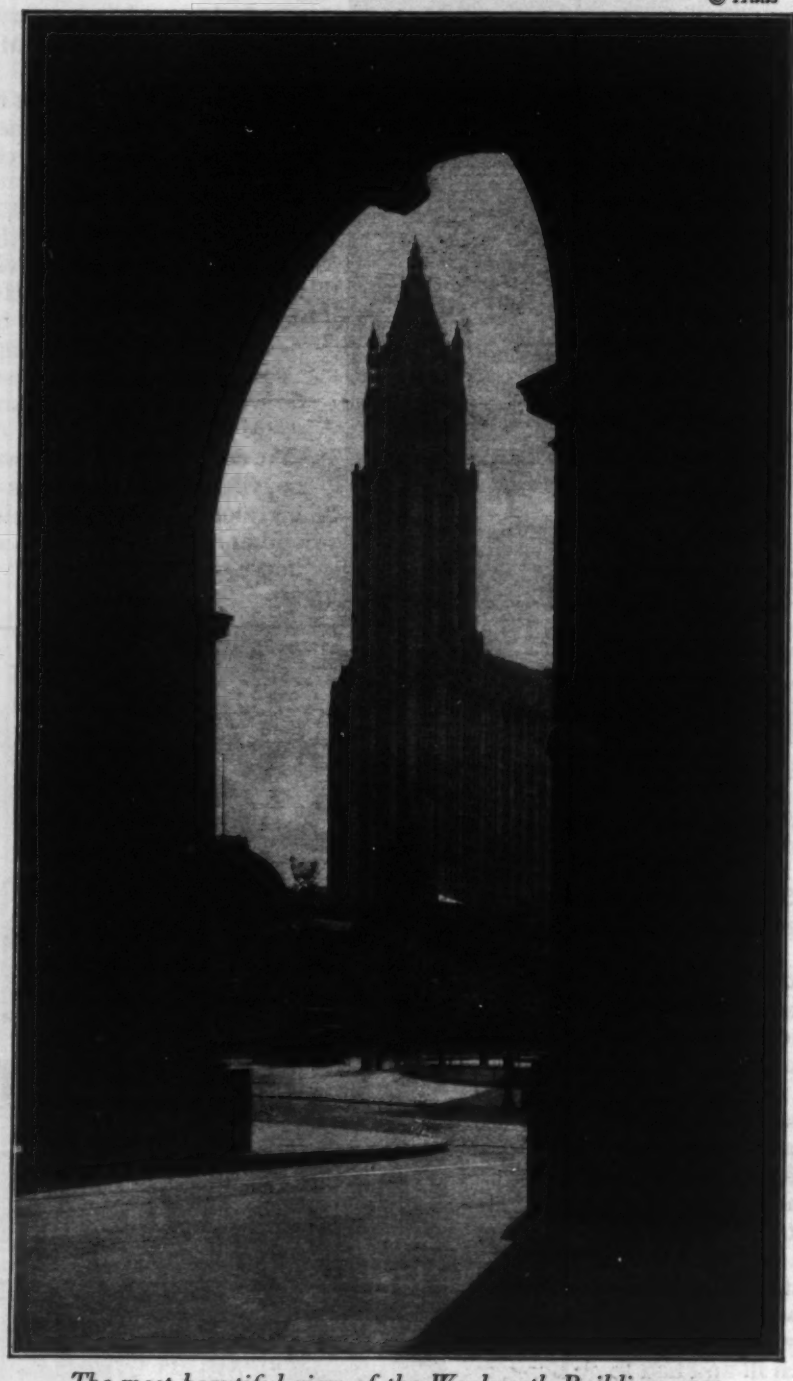
ANY ARTICLE ON THIS COUNTER FOR FIVE CENTS

Immediately, things began to happen. Like magic, the goods on the five-cent counter faded away and the money flowed into the cash drawer. It was amazing how the things went. From all over town and country people came in throngs to buy those talked-of goods.

Moore had bought about a hundred dollars' worth of the five-cent stock, but at the end of the first selling day he telegraphed to New York for an additional seventy-five dollars' worth. Until they arrived, the counter in the center of the store was empty.

That was the beginning of a five-cent craze that swept our part of New York State, and other sections of the country. In many respects it was simply a craze, without any regard for business principles, and of course it did not survive. But while it lasted, the five-cent pieces certainly traveled the pace, and quite a pace it was.

Moore & Smith were the center of this trade. Not only did they do a rushing business over their five-cent retail counters, but they became the wholesale center. In many of the towns around, merchants opened five-cent departments or five-cent stores. Those were busy days at the store of Moore & Smith. Every day there was a big batch of letters from outside merchants, ordering goods to be rushed through, and a stream of telegrams poured in. The orders ranged from $100 to $1000, and the matter of price was a secondary consideration; so, too, was the matter of quality, and even the kinds of goods made little difference to these clamoring merchants and would-be merchants. Anything went, if it could be classed as a five-cent article.



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The most beautiful view of the Woolworth Building, seen through the arch of the New York Municipal Building across the historic little City Hall

I must say, however, that despite all the opportunity Moore & Smith had to take advantage of these people, they never once did so, to my knowledge. They bought such goods in New York as they believed suited to the five-cent trade, and sold them at wholesale at fair prices. But of course the ultimate market for this class of goods had not been studied as it has been since.

Naturally some of Moore & Smith's clerks got the fever, and I was one of them. Day after day and week after week I saw the five-cent tide grow. Every train brought buyers from the surrounding towns. And it fired me with a desire to get into the game myself.

I did a good deal of thinking before I took any definite action. To give up a salary of $8.50 a week was a serious thing to consider. Besides, I didn't have any money saved up, and was living from hand to mouth. How to get into business for myself, then, was something of a problem.

But one day I went to Mr. Moore and asked him how much capital I'd need to start a five-cent store. He told me that I might get through with three hundred dollars. That amount looked like an impossibility. Father would have backed me if he'd had the money. He was a gen-

erous man, whose money got away from him much more easily than it came back. But, since he was unable to help me, I went to an uncle and asked him if he would sign a note with me for three hundred dollars.

He would not—most emphatically no. He said I was very foolish to think of such a thing, and that if I knew on which side my bread was buttered I'd hang on to my eight-fifty job. Jobs like that weren't lying around loose. Then he hadn't any faith in the five-cent business. I'd better steer clear of it. How could there ever be any money in selling goods for five cents?

Of course I knew that my uncle was a pretty level-headed man, and his advice was discouraging enough. Still, it didn't dampen my ambition for very long. Finally I went to Mr. Moore and asked him if his firm would sell me three hundred dollars' worth of goods on credit.

He said it would.

THEREFORE, one bitter winter's day, about the beginning of the year 1879, I said good-by to my associates in the Moore & Smith store, and good-by to my family as well, and started out to find a location for my proposed store. As I look back now I don't understand how I summoned up nerve enough to do it, for I had practically no money, no merchandising experience except as a clerk, and no idea at all as to location.

But, having resigned my place in the store, I went away on a pure scouting expedition. The field was overworked in Watertown, Great Bend was too insignificant to be considered, and Carthage didn't suit me. So I made a tour of a dozen towns farther down in New York State, husbanding my small fund of expense money to the utmost, and inspecting each of the towns with an eye to sales possibilities, vacant stores, rents, and so on.

In some of the towns I was impressed favorably with the sales opportunities, but either there wasn't a store available or else the rents were so high that I couldn't touch them. So on and on I went, and by the time I reached Utica my funds were almost exhausted and my stock of courage dwindling.

Utica, however, impressed me very deeply. It had a population of about 35,000 people, and the surroundings seemed favorable. I made up my mind right away that if I could get any sort of store, I wouldn't search further. There wasn't a five-cent store in the city.

On Bleecker Street, near Genesee, I found a little vacant storeroom, thirteen feet wide and twenty feet deep, that was just about what I wanted. On hunting up the agent, I was told that the rental was $35 a month, and that a year's lease would be required. I did not want to sign a lease, for I realized that I was merely conducting an experiment. Neither did I wish to tell the landlord that I meant to start a five-cent store, because the attitude of many men toward that line was unfavorable. It was a sort of unorthodox business, an innovation, and was being promoted mostly by irresponsible and inexperienced young men like myself. So, instead of going into detail as to my plans, I merely said that I meant to sell a variety of goods.

The matter of the lease came near ending the case; but evidently the landlord was anxious to rent the place, for finally he waived the lease entirely and agreed to rent on a monthly basis. I do not now remember just how I succeeded in arguing him into giving me possession without the payment of any advance rent whatever; but my early records, which are still preserved, show this to be the fact. None of the rent was paid until March 22—a month after the opening of the store.

But I had a great deal to do before the opening. I hurried back to Watertown on the first train, and carried to my wife the exciting news that I had found a place, and that we were going to live in Utica.

That day I selected my stock at Moore & Smith's, and it came to $315.41, for which I gave my note. Then I helped to pack the stuff and get it started on its way to Utica. This done, I hurried back to that city and got the store ready. The preparations were not extensive, as you may imagine. I had counters made of plain pine, and they were so crude and temporary that I did not even charge them to a fixture account, but considered them as expense. They cost me somewhere around eight dollars.

Among the items comprising practically all the fixture account of that first Utica store were the following:

Kerosene Lamp	$5.50
Mallet	.38
Broom	.10
Kerosene oil can	.10
Hatchet	.75
Box opener	.25
Cash drawer	.50
Red cambric for front of counters	.53
Writing desk	1.55
Feather duster	.15
Office stool	.65
Total	$10.46

Among the items of expense incurred in opening the store were a daybook, a ledger and a cashbook, very small, costing sixty cents apiece. Another item was twenty and one-half pounds of wrapping paper, at eight cents a pound. The books that hold these entries I now have in a vault in my office in the Woolworth Building in New York. Until I got them out for use in the present history, I had not looked at them for many years. I find, however, that they serve to recall to me many things that otherwise I am afraid I should not have remembered.

The goods from Watertown arrived promptly, and, after paying the freight, which was $7.43, I was practically "strapped." But meanwhile I had ordered 2,000 circulars printed, at $3.75 a thousand, giving a list of all the items in my five-cent stock. These circulars I caused to be distributed about Utica, announcing my opening for Saturday evening, February 22, 1879, at eight o'clock.

HERE is a list of the principal items, together with the prices I paid for them:

Toy dustpans	$4.75	per gross
Tin pepper boxes	3.75	"
Drinking cups	3.50	"
Gravy strainers	5.50	"
Tin scoops	5.65	"
Purses	5.25	"
Biscuit cutters	3.00	"
Flour dredges	5.25	"
School straps	4.50	"
Skimmers	2.50	"
Egg whips	5.50	"
Apple corers	5.75	"
Cast-iron and sad-iron stands	5.00	"
Fire shovels	5.50	"
Boot blacking	5.75	"
Animal soap	5.85	"
Stamped-in cup	5.50	"
Candlesticks	4.50	"
Ladles	4.50	"
A B C Plates	2.50	"
Scalloped pie plates	5.75	"
Baseballs	4.75	"
Cast-iron cover lifters	4.00	"
Tack hammers	4.85	"
Tack claws	5.25	"
Animal cake cutters	4.00	"
Cake turners	5.65	"
Large graters	5.25	"
Jelly-cake tins	4.75	"
Writing books	5.00	"
Pencil charms	5.75	"
Lather brushes	5.50	"
Tin spoons	4.00	"

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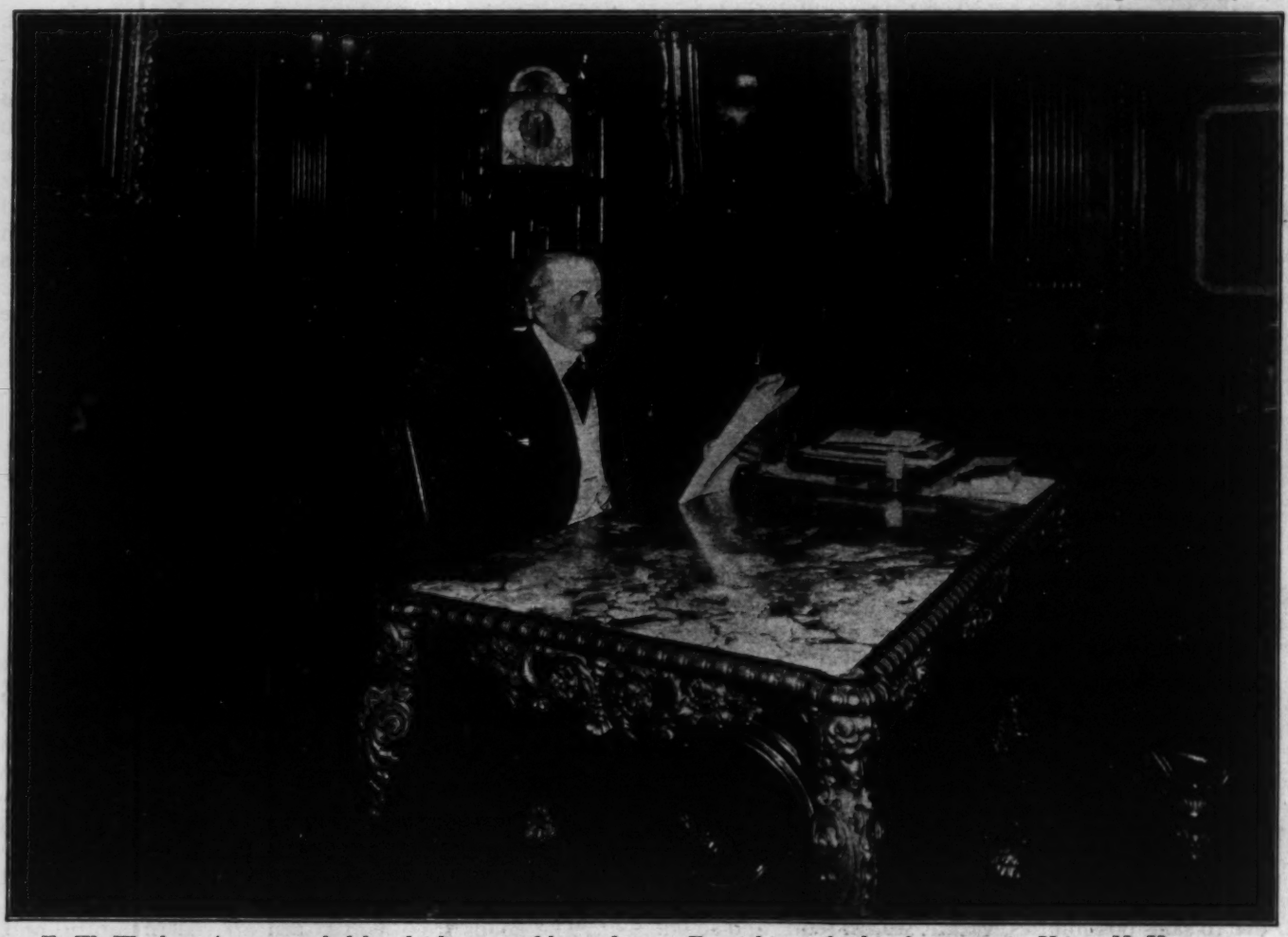


F. W. Woolworth surrounded by the luxury of later days. Furnishings for his first store in Utica, N. Y., cost him about $18. Thirty-three years later he spent $13,000,000 on the Woolworth Building

Police whistle	$5.00	per gross
Pie plates	4.75	"
Red jewelry	5.00	"
Turkey-red napkins	.50	per dozen
Hemstitched handkerchiefs	.40	"
Linen thread	.39	"
Barbers' thread	.43	"

Novelties, $1.15 to $1.40 per thousand

These prices were very high, in most cases, as compared with the prices for similar goods today. One effect of the five-and-ten-cent business certainly has been to bring down the wholesale prices of an ever-expanding line of goods and thus make them available for this type of trade, in the face of the constantly increasing prices for most goods that are outside of the five-and-ten-cent store's possibilities. Thus, in 1879, we paid $5 a gross for a half-pint dipper, on which we stood a real loss, from the standpoint of net profit. Today we can buy that same dipper at $2 a gross. The red napkins that originally cost us 50 cents a dozen can be bought now for 20 cents.

IN my first stock of goods were six kinds of soap, to sell at five cents, yet I paid as high as $5.75 a gross for some of it. I paid $5.75 a gross, too, for ordinary pins, lead pencils, metal back combs and articles of that sort. All these take a greatly reduced price today. In those days the merchandise that could be purchased to sell at five cents was limited to notions, handkerchiefs, a few toys, and some tinware.

On this first bill of goods you will notice an item of red jewelry at $5 a gross. I bought two gross for my opening, and I believe it was one of the largest, perhaps the largest, of the purchases. Red jewelry was made of a sour-milk composition, and was very popular at that time, so I had resolved to plunge and make a real "killing" from it. It did look like a rather daring thing, however, to invest $10 in the stuff.

I began to unpack my goods on Wednesday or Thursday preceding the Saturday set for the opening, and I worked like a Trojan. On Friday evening I had the goods all in the store, but everything was in a great litter, with loose paper scattered about on the floor and the goods in a general mix-up on the counters and shelves. To keep people from satisfying their curiosity and thus anticipating the grand opening, I had fastened papers at the doors and windows. While I was working in the muss, about nine o'clock, somebody knocked at the door. I went to see who it was, and found a woman standing there. She said she would like to come in and buy some goods.

'But the store isn't open for business, madam," I said. "If you will come here tomorrow night things will be in shape and you can select what you want."

"I know what I want," she answered. "I have read your circulars, and I find among the list of goods a fire shovel, at five cents. I wish to purchase a fire shovel."

"Very well," said I. "Just step inside and I'll wrap it up for you."

She did so, and I sold her the shovel, which she carried away in triumph a minute later.

She was my first customer, and had I dreamed of the things that were destined to happen to me in subsequent years I most certainly should have taken her name, and kept that first money. As it is, I don't know who she was.

By eight o'clock the next evening I had my little store quite in order, and was ready to begin taking in the money in earnest. It began to come in, but not with any great rush. The people straggled in, and when the last

one had gone out and the hour was close to midnight I counted up receipts and found I had taken in $9.

On the following Monday business went along quite comfortably, and at night the receipts, counting those of Saturday evening, were $50.22.

On the next day's record in my old-time cash book I find a charge of twenty-five cents spent in advertising for a clerk, and also an item of ten cents for a money bag. So you see that I felt encouraged. On February 26 I find a charge of twenty cents for revenue stamps, indicating that I had opened a bank account, for revenue stamps were required at that time on checks.

I MIGHT say, here, that although I was running a five-cent store, I never saw any nickels in those days. The government didn't make any. We used "shin plasters," or fractional currency, so that most of my early receipts came to me in the form of currency in denominations of five, ten, twenty-five and fifty cents.

Now the history of that first store of mine was destined to be a melancholy one, but in the beginning it did look as if I had hit a vein of real prosperity. Sales kept along for a time at a steady pace, and on March 4, twelve days after my opening, I was able to pay $100 on my note to Moore & Smith. I now employed two clerks regularly, and on Saturday evenings an extra one. My first clerk was a young man named Edwins, and the second was a Miss Stebbins. Both of them were with me practically from the time I opened until—but I'll come to that a little later. These two afterward opened a store of their own in the same location, and had great hopes of making their fortune; but the business lasted only a few months and they lost all the money they had saved in trying to make it pay.

Running a five-cent store was not the bonanza it has often been pictured. I have shown you how small the margin of gross profit was on almost all items that were the best sellers, so that in order to make a store go it was necessary to sell quite a volume of goods and turn stocks over very rapidly. Also, it was necessary to keep expenses down to the most rigid economy.

Here are some random items of expense which, to me, have a curious blending of economy and stilted hopes:

Two lamp chimneys	$0.20
One brush broom	.15
One gallon kerosene oil	.10
Sprinkler for floor	.60
Sign, "The Great Five-Cent Store"	3.00
Putting up sign	1.00

That last item of a dollar might better have been saved. Yet there were not many dollars that I wasted on the store. However, in the first flush of imaginary success, I lost my head one day and bought my wife a dolman that cost me $45. She was not a party to this rash extravagance, and was quite overcome when I proudly presented it.

I have had that dolman in my thoughts a good many times since, when temptations came to plunge; so I think that after all it was a good investment.

I had not yet brought my family down to Utica, and, with the exception of this costly mantle, we were living as cheaply as we could. During March I find that I limited my drawing account to five dollars a week.

It was not far along in March, however, when my sales began to show symptoms of weakness. The curiosity of the people seemed to be satisfied, and they commenced to let me alone. My stock wasn't diversified enough and the markets surrounding me were not just the right kind. In my efforts to stimulate business I had a sign painted and paid a boy twenty-five cents to carry it around the streets. Then, as sales still continued to decline, I spent $13.72 on April 8 for four thousand circulars. These I had distributed around the city. I had no money for other forms of advertising.

© Brown Bros

Woolworth's store at Harrisburg, Pa., rented in 1879 at $5 a week—a failure within a year

Even in April I still cherished hopes of pulling through, and I continued to buy goods. But in May I began to see that things were hopeless. Business was getting away from me in spite of all I could do. Every week, sales showed up less. The public had about lost interest in me, and I realized that I must either close up the business voluntarily or be closed out by creditors at a date not far distant.

IN this dilemma it looked to me as if there could be only one choice. If the closing must be done, I would do it myself. But there was a bigger question to be answered. After the closing—what then?'

It was intolerable to think of going back to Watertown to look for work

Photos from Brown Bros.

again, and it was equally intolerable to think of giving up my cherished project of being in business for myself. The more I thought of it, the more I became convinced that the trouble lay not so much in the five-cent business itself, or in myself, as it did in my location. If only I had considered this matter more carefully, I felt that I could have done a volume of business sufficiently large to succeed.

Therefore, I came to the conclusion that the thing to do was to quit at Utica, while I still had a little money at my command, and start a store in some other locality. Accordingly, I drew $30 from the bank on May 28, about three months after the opening in Utica, and, leaving the store in charge of Edwins, started out again on a scouting expedition. I had no idea whatever as to where fate might set me down.

Acting on the suggestion of a friend, I went to Lancaster, not stopping in New York or anywhere else longer than was necessary to change cars. My thirty-dollar expense fund, taken out of my unsuccessful business in Utica, was fading away with alarming rapidity. Every minute of time that I wasted lessened the chances of putting through my plan. The railroad fare alone was somewhere around $25, so I was traveling on a very slender margin. I was not tempted to indulge in sleeping cars or parlor cars, or to eat table d'hote meals. A sandwich looked pretty good to me.

Early photo of the humble Lancaster store, where purchasers' parcels were wrapped in old newspapers

The Fifth Avenue store, today, in heart of New York's finest shopping district

It was an all-day trip to Lancaster from Utica, then, and I reached that city about dusk on a train from Philadelphia, some sixty miles away. As it happened, this was the very best time I could have arrived, for I saw Lancaster when it was at its best for my purpose. I was amazed as I walked up from the depot to see the crowds on the streets. I had never seen anything like it. The sidewalks were jammed with people, the stores were filled with customers, lights were blazing, and there was an amazing air of business and prosperity. In size, the town did not differ greatly from Utica, but the part of it in which I now found myself was radically different from the part of Utica where my store was located. Right away, I felt that Lancaster was the place for me.

After spending a couple of hours walking around the business part of the city, and getting my supper in a cheap restaurant, I found a hotel—a vile old one it was, too—where I got lodgings for fifty cents. Early next morning I started out to find a vacant store, and at No.

170 North Queen Street I found one that promised to meet my requirements. After concluding arrangements for the place, I took the first train for Utica, arriving there almost stranded financially, but with my hopes renewed and my purpose strong.

I communicated with Moore & Smith, told them of my plans, and asked them what further credit they could allow me. The faith they seemed to have in me was rather surprising, for they replied that they would let me have additional goods to the extent of two or three hundred dollars. Then, on June 11, I closed my Utica store. Today that original store is used for a barber shop.

I DIDN'T have any money to throw away; nor any time to lose. There was a little cash left in the bank, but it had to work overtime in order to accomplish what I had undertaken. I now proceeded to pack up my stock of goods and ship them off to Lancaster. Then, with a rather melancholy survey of the town that had downed me, I took the train myself.

Although I didn't fully realize it at the time, I was beginning what afterward proved to be an essential policy of our business—to take our stores to the people, instead of expecting them to come to us. In inaugurating this policy, I think I was actuated to a considerable degree by a realization of the fact that I was not a natural-born salesman, and that if I were to achieve any real success it must come from going right among people who needed certain goods, and then supplying the goods.

The Utica stock reached Lancaster in a few days, and the additional goods came from Watertown. There were no elaborate preparations, and on June 21, eleven days after the closing of the Utica store, I opened the Lancaster establishment.

I now have in my possession a postal card that I wrote next day to my father. It tells very succinctly the story of my first day, and I quote from it:

Lancaster, Pa., June 22, 1879.

Dear Father:—I opened my store here for trade yesterday, and did not advertise any. No one knew there was a five-cent store in the city till Tuesday night, and we managed to sell yesterday in one day $127.65, which is the most I ever sold in a day. I even sold $80 in the evening. I had seven clerks . . . . I think some of starting a branch store in Harrisburg and putting Sam in it, if Moore & Smith will spare him. Direct letters to me at 170 N. Queen Street, Lancaster.

This shows that right away, on the very first day in Lancaster, I began to think about expansion. My brother Sam, you see, was now working for Moore & Smith in Watertown.

Business continued to be good at Lancaster, as the days went by; but I had learned some lessons at Utica, and I wasn't buying any more dolmans. It looked as if I had struck a location where the volume of sales would be sufficient to carry me through, but I kept expenses down to the lowest limit. For one thing—and this will indicate how closely I figured expenses—I economized on wrapping paper. In Utica this item had worried me because it seemed out of proportion to the slim margin of profit on the goods. Up there, wrapping paper at eight cents a pound had faded away very fast. So now I went to a newspaper office in Lancaster and inquired the price of old newspapers. I was told that I might have a great quantity at two cents a pound.

This looked pretty good. I bought all I could carry on my shoulder, and lugged them over to the store. Thereafter, for quite a while we dispensed with high-toned wrapping paper and wrapped all our goods in the old newspapers, saving six cents a pound.

Early in July I began to think seriously of the project of opening a second store. I went over to Harrisburg, about thirty-five miles northwest of Lancaster, and found a vacant room on Third Street. It was a tiny place, twelve feet wide and sixteen feet deep—the smallest store, in fact, that we ever had. The building is still in existence. but the store itself has been enlarged and I believe it is now used for a telegraph office.

The rent of this place was five dollars a week, which looked big for so insignificant a store. However, I rented it. Then I wrote to my brother in Watertown and offered him seven dollars a week to come down as manager. In a few days he came. The goods arrived, and on July 19 he opened up for business. It was a miniature store in every respect, the whole salary list and rent aggregating only $16 a week.

The first day's sales were $85.41, which looked very encouraging. However, I was doomed to just the same sort of disappointment in Harrisburg that I had met in Utica. Something was wrong with the location. Business flourished for a few weeks, and then our Harrisburg sales began to drop off. They picked up for a time during the Christmas season of 1879, but after that the little store grew very lonely. In March we decided to close it out and transfer the stock to a new store in some other town. We settled upon York. Therefore, we closed the Harrisburg store on March 29, and opened the York store April 3, 1880. My brother went there as manager, at a salary of $8 a week.

"ONE effect of the five-and-ten-cent business," Mr. Woolworth writes in his autobiography, "has certainly been to bring down the wholesale price of an ever-expanding line of goods, in the face of constantly increasing prices for most goods outside the five-and-ten-cent store's reach."

The "current" prices quoted in Mr. Woolworth's autobiography refer of course to the period at which it was written, just before his death.

In a following article Edward Mott Woolley brings down to date the outstanding features of the Woolworth success. He points out that the ten-cent stores have opened up enormous new markets to manufacturers of formerly higher-priced goods; that they have made possible larger profits for producers as well as lower prices to consumers; and that they have helped give many a small manufacturer a suddenly flourishing business.

This remarkably interesting sequel to the brief Woolworth autobiography here published will be a feature of McCLURE'S for January.

THE York store had a very poor location, with small, inconspicuous show windows. But like most of our other stores that have proved unsuccessful, it started off with quite a boom. I find among my records the following schedule of its sales by the week, for twelve weeks:

First week	$222.52
Second week	176.46
Third week	90.80
Fourth week	107.94
Fifth week	76.97
Sixth week	62.99
Seventh week	41.95
Eighth week	45.20
Ninth week	46.54
Tenth week	46.25
Eleventh week	38.70
Twelfth week	35.60

The largest single day's sales at York were $59.12, on a Saturday in April, and the smallest day's receipts were $3.05 on June 25. Altogether, we sold approximately $1,000 in goods, on which the net profit for the entire three months was $36.

There is no further need to explain why the York store was closed on June 30. The goods were packed up and shipped to Lancaster and my brother came there to work.

Discouraging as were these attempts to establish a branch store, I still felt that there must be a town somewhere about that would offer as good an opportunity as Lancaster was proving to be. The Lancaster sales were more than holding their own, and, by careful management, I was able to make my living expenses and gradually save money. I brought my family down to Lancaster to live.

During the next five months I studied the situation, made quite a number of trips around the adjacent country, and finally selected Scranton as the scene of another attempt. I am inclined to think that persistence played as big a part as anything in my early successes—persistence and a spirit that made me rebel against accepting defeat.

THE Scranton store was opened November 6, 1880, on a Saturday, with initial sales of only $43.20. The first week's sales were $242.08, but the second week dropped to $137.11. Then, the Christmas season coming on, we sold in one week goods to the extent of $621.71. On the day before Christmas the sales were $235.07.

After that, however, there came a fearful slump, so that in January, 1881, sales on one day dropped to $5.95. The largest week's sales in January were $72.01.

My brother was now in charge of the Scranton store, and, despite the discouragements, we both believed the location to be a good one. It looked as if Scranton ought to develop a business for us, and we resolved to stick it out there. And that Scranton store has never been abandoned. Neither has the Lancaster store. The latter is the oldest existing five-and-ten-cent store in the world, and the Scranton store is the second oldest.

ONE of the most serious of my early difficulties lay in the buying of goods at prices which would justify their sale at five and ten cents. Manufacturers would not sell to me direct, but told me to go to the jobbers. It wasn't a question of quality, but of policy. I was a retailer, and that settled the matter with the manufacturers.

But I was doing business on a very small margin of gross profit, and trying to give the people a bigger and bigger variety of goods at five and ten cents. Pretty early in the game I saw that if I were to make my stores go I must find a way of buying closer.

It is almost impossible to convey here any adequate idea of the buying difficulties we encountered in those early years, or how hard we had to work to get the low prices that we had to have. A solid wall of custom and prejudice confronted us, no matter in what direction we turned. The manufacturer would almost invariably protect the jobber in high prices, and that was why prices were so high thirty-five or forty years ago.

In 1887, in the course of our development of new ideas and new lines of goods for our business, I conceived the idea of selling candy at five cents a quarter pound. At that time it was almost impossible to buy any candy fit to eat at less than twenty-five cents a pound, wholesale, while most candies ranged very much higher. But Mr. Moore and I decided to see what we could find in New York in job candies.

We called on a great many concerns, meeting with the same treatment at all of them. Our plan to sell candy at the rate of twenty cents a pound was ridiculous. We were told that it couldn't even be manufactured at such a figure. Our argument was that we expected to be able to sell large quantities when we really got into the thing, but this supposition was taken with skepticism. The initial orders we wanted to place were indeed very small, for we didn't dare to order many pounds of candy as an experiment.

The big manufacturers took absolutely no interest in us, and, after wandering all over New York in fruitless efforts, we decided to hunt up some small manufacturers and put the same proposition up to them. While so engaged, we came upon a little store on Wooster Street, west of Broadway, that bore a sign, "D. Arnould."

We went in, found Mr. Arnould there, and discovered him to be a genial gentleman who did not fly to pieces when we told him our errand. We asked him if he considered it possible to get up a line of candy that we could sell at retail on the basis of twenty cents a pound. We explained that we simply had to sell it at that price if we were to sell it at all.

"Well," said he, "it is a difficult proposition that you put up to me, gentlemen, but I'll see what I can do with it. Come in to see me tomorrow."

We didn't hunt any more that day, but the next day we went back to see Arnould, and, to our surprise, he had a list of about twenty kinds of candies he could sell us at prices that would yield a small profit on a retail basis of twenty cents.

This appealed to us, and right there in his store, without consulting any of our managers, we decided to test out this candy line. We said to Mr. Arnould:

"You can have an order of a hundred pounds for each of five stores."

To us, this looked like a tremendously big order.

NONE of the candies thus ordered were of the cheap, worthless varieties, but were composed of chocolates, chocolate creams, marshmallows, and the ordinary run of hard candies. After we had completed the order we went to another store in New York and purchased five scales for the stores, and five sets of glass trays in which to display the new line on the counters. Then we wrote letters to the five managers, telling them what we had done and instructing them how to handle and display the candy when it arrived, and to report results as soon as possible. We set a certain Saturday morning as the date for the candy opening.

Nearly all of those managers hastened to register a written protest against the candy. It was too sticky for us to bother with at all, they said. The people would not buy it in stores such as our establishments were. The idea was a big mistake, and they hoped the candy order would be cancelled.

I wrote back that the plan would be tried, and that the risk was small, anyway. Then I added that since the candy was surely going into the store, they would have to sell it.

Well, the specified Saturday came around, and the candy was there, just as we planned. But when Saturday night came, it wasn't there. About every piece of candy in those five stores was sold in that one day, and on Monday morning we got loud clamors for more, from the managers.

That was the beginning of one of the biggest lines ever handled in the five-and-ten-cent business. The demand suddenly became so great that Mr. Arnould found it impossible to handle even a small portion of it, although he soon erected a large

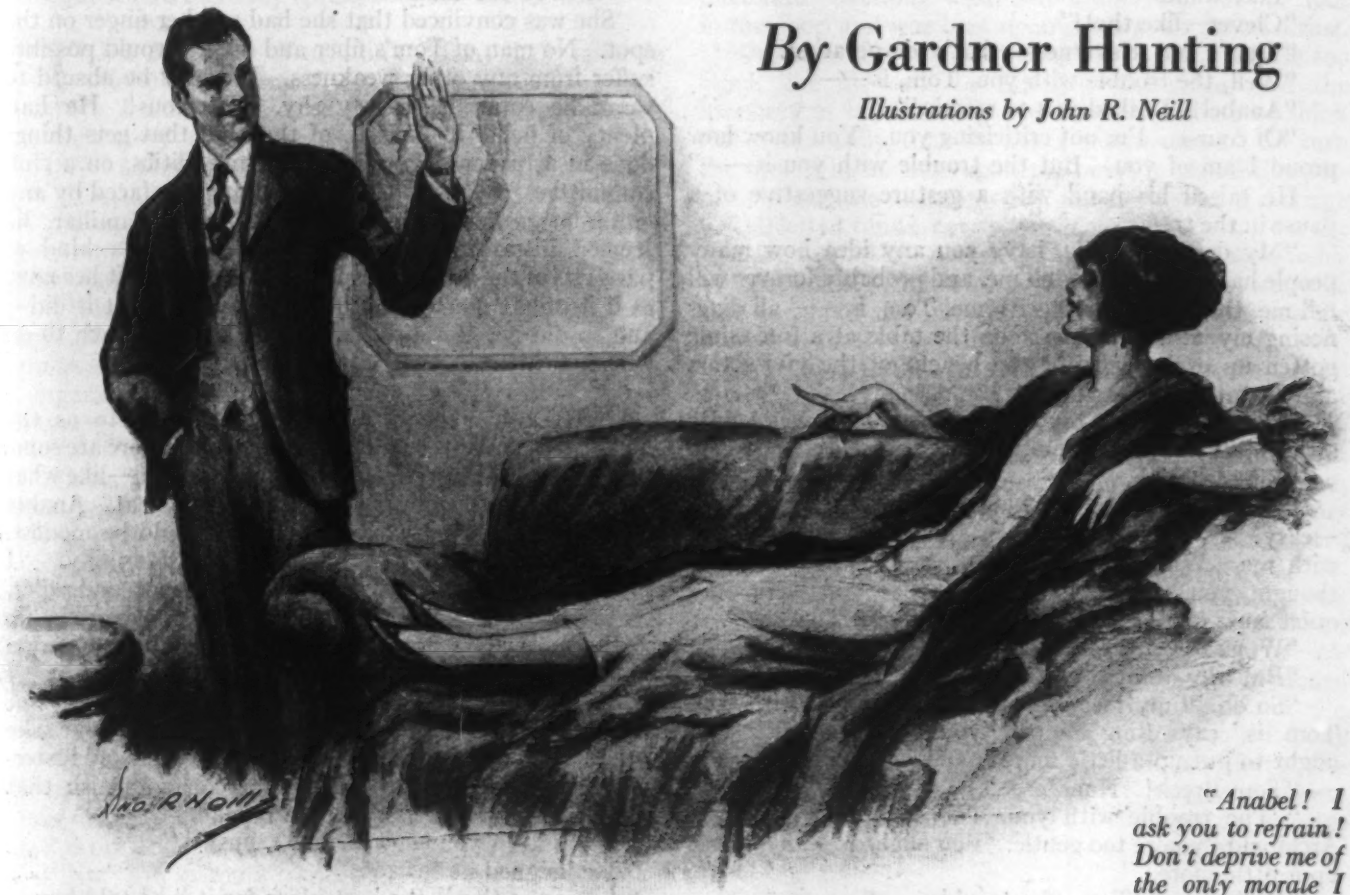
[*Continued on page 117*]

The Trouble with You, Tom—

Being the Story of Wifely Endeavors to Remodel a Husband

By Gardner Hunting

Illustrations by John R. Neill



"Anabel! I ask you to refrain! Don't deprive me of the only morale I have left!"

ANABEL CARTWRIGHT had married Tom Breck, sincerely believing him satisfactory. He was handsome, he was kind; he was generous, he was patient; he was talented, he was industrious. He had fine gray eyes and a pleasing voice, a sense of humor and an excellent earning capacity. If he was socially a little quiet—conservative, you know—when betrothed to him, she had found no fault with that. He was impulsive and eager enough with her.

Clara Langton had once said of him, after the announcement of Anabel's engagement, that he was too good to be perfect. But Anabel suspected that Clara saw all affairs like this more or less distorted, as from the high level of a shelf. And, besides, Tom wore his watch on a chain, and possessed a set of old pipes, a French military decoration, a scar with a pedigree and a dog with none—which things variously stamped him as forged and hammered, not merely cast in the mold of a man.

But when they had actually carted the wedding gifts home and she really got around to look things over, she found the inevitable flaw in him. What she had thought was a rather unobjectionable streak of reserve in an engaged man seemed almost at once to become practically a social bar sinister in a husband. Under her quite proper monopoly of him during the prenuptial period, he had been gratifyingly quiet toward others; but now she came suddenly and unwarned upon the discovery that, where all strangers, most acquaintances and even some friends were concerned, he was dumb!

Breck was by profession an advertisement writer—rather an unusually successful young planner of copy and campaigns for a big concern. It is a calling which does not necessarily demand nimbleness of tongue; hence his progress so far. But Anabel's ambition was large.

Whether or not a woman is cast down by the sudden realization that a pet possession needs repair, and whether or not compensation arises with the appeal to her creative instinct, it is certain that her unvarying reaction is to rise and tinker. Anabel Breck began on the first Thursday after the first Monday after the hymeneal full moon to make her husband over.

"Tom," she said on that night, as they reached home after the Van Brunts' dance, "will you mind very much if I sometimes criticize you a little? You know, I want you to criticize me, if I do anything you don't like, and—you won't be hurt, will you, if I tell you one thing that I think——"

SHE stopped. He was looking at her with a sort of lamb-arrived-at-the-slaughter expression that astonished her to the confusion of her purpose—momentarily.

"Don't say it, Anabel," he said, slowly lighting his oldest pipe.

"What?"

"Don't say it. My feelings are already bound up in linen and arnica. I carry my self-love in a sling. My conceit goes on crutches—my vanity in a wheel chair. I don't believe I can stand much more and continue to get about unaided. So, please—don't you also, oh, Anabel!"

"Don't what?" she asked in genuine astonishment.

"Don't say, 'The trouble with you, Tom, is——' unless the trailer you intend to hitch on behind will comfortably transport my remains."

She looked at him with frank amazement. "Why don't you always talk like that?"

"Like what?"

"Clever—like that!"

"That's not cleverness—that's desperation."

"Well, the trouble with you, Tom, is——"

"Anabel! I asked you to refrain!"

"Of course. I'm not criticizing you. You know how proud I am of you. But the trouble with you is——"

He raised his hand with a gesture suggestive of a pause in the traffic.

"My dear new wife, have you any idea how many people have told me, do tell me, and probably forever will tell me, that 'the trouble with me, Tom, is——' all diagnosing my case as if I were on the table at a free clinic gotten up exclusively for the benefit of the vivisectors and not at all for the patient?"

She was amazed, but she laughed. "If you'd only always talk like that!" she cried, with excited enthusiasm.

"Like what?"

"Oh—metaphorical! Humorous! Witty! Ah, Tom—easy! Self-possessed! You can when you're alone with me. Why not with others, in—well, socially? I thought you could if you liked—that you were only quiet from choice. The trouble with you, Tom, is——"

"Woman!"

"But why won't you let me tell you? I think I know."

"So do all my mere friends. 'The trouble with you, Tom, is,' says Bing Hippel, 'you're too honest. You ought to put up a little more front!' "

"Tom Breck! Nonsense!"

" 'The trouble with you, Tom, is,' says old Peter Archibald, 'you're too gentle. You ought to—ah—speak up a little more.' "

"Ridiculous! Tom, the trouble——"

" 'The trouble with you, Tom, is,' says Billy Sankey, 'that you're too deferential. . You ought to insult somebody once in a while—to let 'em know you're on the map!' "

"Absurd!"

" 'You're not self-possessed enough, Tom,' says Emily Dickson. 'You should be more graceful.' "

"Tom! She didn't!"

"SHE did. They all do! They all know that socially I'm the victim of some malign malady, but so far as their getting at the root of my trouble is concerned, I might as well be taking a heal-yourself correspondence course by one-way radio—or be the strictly inaccessible chicken in the strictly fresh egg. Anyhow, no two diagnosticians see me alike or prescribe the same soothing syrup. They know that as a social luminary, I'm a tallow dip. But there's not a pair of snuffers among 'em! When I'm in the presence of my peers, I'm self-consciously mind-fogged and tongue-tied. What I need is a squeegee on my brain-shield or a muffler-cutout on my larynx—or both!"

"Oh, Tom! That would make a wonderful line in a comedy! You ought to write a play! Why, you just sparkle when you let yourself go. The trouble with you——"

"The trouble with me, Tom, is—that everything is the trouble with me. My critics have subtracted all my moral qualities but one. I don't know what one that is, but it's all the morale I have left, and now you want to amputate it! I—I thought you understood, and pitied me!" he ended pleadingly.

"Thomas, don't be foolish! You are a very unusual man. You're perfectly splendid looking; you have a fine mind, great ability, exceptional taste, delightful manner—you're a perfect dear! The only trouble——"

"Help! Stop! It is, as I say, my only one! Leave it—oh, leave it to me!"

"You're too modest!"

She was convinced that she had put her finger on the spot. No man of Tom's fiber and quality could possibly suffer from any other weakness. It would be absurd to think he could be merely shy. Ridiculous! He had plenty of belief in himself, of the kind that gets things done in a business way, in suburban politics, on a club committee. But at a dance, or a dinner, or faced by any group of people with whom he was not familiar, he seemed instantly to become afflicted with a kind of paralysis of the faculty of speech. He grinned at her now, as if it didn't matter and he didn't mind. But it did—and so did he. So did she. It would have much to do with his career.

ANABEL had often heard Woman referred to as the Eternal Mystery. But she knew that there are some things that are mysteries, even to most women—like what happens under a motor's hood, and a man's hat. Anabel couldn't understand why Tom Breck should be modest.

"I never used to be," he said, consideringly. "I think I did my share of bragging in my bicycle and roller-skate days. Even since my daily vehicles have grown up to the maturity of cord tires, I seem to recall a period when I could recount exploits. But somehow, since I knew you, Anabel—of course it isn't your fault—but ever since I have wanted specially to shine, for your sake and to your credit, I seem to have lost my fine old luster-ware refulgence, and to have taken on a tarnish that won't yield to brick-grit or putz pomade!"

"You keep your light under a bushel."

He laughed at that.

"Perhaps that's the best place for it," he told her.

"You've nothing to be ashamed of, Tom. I know that. But I want you to talk."

"But, Anabel, I can't think of anything to say."

"You talk readily enough at home."

"Well, I feel free to say anything I like to my wife—like all husbands. But when I met old Mrs. Courtland tonight, all I could remember was that we drove out past her place Sunday and didn't call——"

"Tom! You didn't mention that!"

"No. I knew you said not to. And when I tried to talk to the Callendars, all I could think of was that we saw them across the house at the picture show—and that they weren't to know that we were there."

"Oh, Tom! You know I didn't want them to know we sat in the balcony!"

"Well, we couldn't get any other seats."

"Yes, but—the balcony! At a picture show! That's why I asked you not to tell anybody we were there!"

"Never mind—I didn't tell them. And then, Mrs. Saddler, who invited us to her party—the night we drove out to the Spencers'——"

"Heavens, Tom! She's not supposed to know we went anywhere that night."

"Just so. We didn't—so far as she is concerned. And that bunch from Baltimore, I wanted to talk over the old town with them, but——"

"But you didn't really know anybody who is anybody, in Baltimore. You were only a newspaper reporter there. They'd think——"

"Sure! Well, so, for one reason or another, my conversational resources seemed as limited as a fast train that stops only on signal, crossing a desert where there aren't

any towns." He looked at his wife in mute perplexity.

"But surely there are things you can talk about besides things we are ashamed of."

"Eh? Yes—but I know you don't want me to talk shop, and you say I make a fool of myself if I start to tell stories on my golf. I nearly told John Sansom tonight where I had my spring overcoat made. He——"

"TOM BRECK! You didn't! That little tailor in Columbus Avenue!"

"No, I didn't. I turned the subject, and got started on that story about the——"

"*Not* about the——"

"Yes, about the——"

"Tom Breck! You don't mean that awful hotel we got into on — on our honeymoon!"

"What? Certainly not! I mean the one about stopping off to see Niagara Falls on the way——"

"You didn't!"

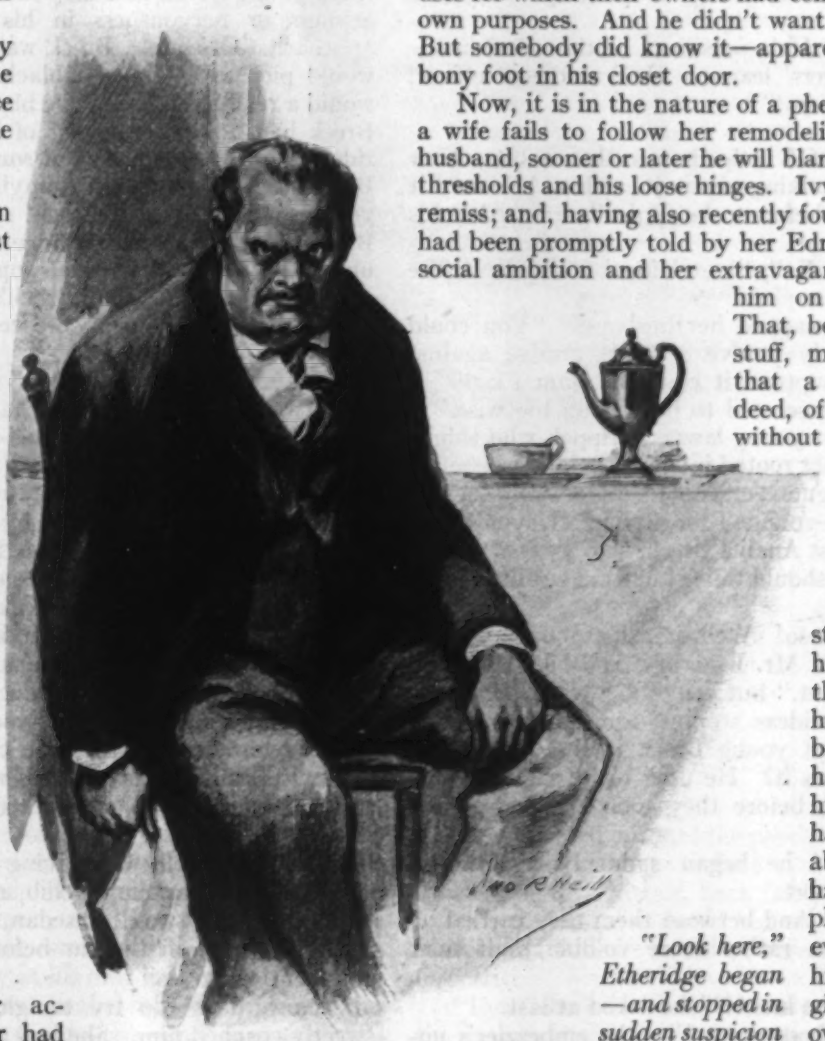
"No, I stopped in time. That's the best thing I do—stop."

For almost the first time, Anabel Breck felt a small stir of anger toward her husband.

"You're blaming me—aren't you?—for putting prohibitions upon you! It's not your modesty so much as it is my pride!"

"No. I'm blaming myself for being so stupid as not to be able to pick subjects not taboo."

Anabel felt the tears start in her eyes. Tom was instantly tender—but puzzled. Of course, no husband would understand what there was here to make a young wife cry.



"Look here," Etheridge began —and stopped in sudden suspicion

Among the older acquaintances who never had quite become friends of the young Brecks were the Edmund Etheridges. They lived in one of the handsomest houses on the Brecks' suburban street—next door, in fact—and were reputed to be prosperous. Edmund Etheridge had come here some years ago to take charge of the local Building and Loan Association, which had enabled a great many brides to acquire remodeling rights simultaneously upon houses and husbands. Whether or not Edmund Etheridge had since accumulated a great deal of money of his own, he had certainly accumulated considerable that belonged to other people. He was generally believed to be a solid success.

But there was a closet in the handsome Etheridge home. Just about the time that Anabel Breck began to find out her husband, the door of this Etheridge closet had abruptly taken to swinging open a bit. Etheridge himself, who, as a salesman of young houses to young people, was accustomed to talk volubly of closet room, was singularly reticent about this feature of his own commodious villa. And it appeared to him extremely important to keep this particular closet closed. Indeed, he was just now engaged in a very earnest, not to say desperate, effort to close it. His trouble was that a bony inhabitant overlong domiciled inside had put his foot in the door, and was bent upon getting out for an airing.

Other people's money had come to seem a little too much like his own to Edmund Etheridge, and the investors in his Building and Loan had come to think rather too lazily that he was a solid success. To turn the spot light at once upon the point in this little spectacle where the costumes are scantiest—Mr. Etheridge had diverted funds, over a considerable period, from the uses for which their owners had contributed them, to his own purposes. And he didn't want anybody to know it. But somebody did know it—apparently. That was the bony foot in his closet door.

Now, it is in the nature of a phenomenon that, when a wife fails to follow her remodeling instinct with her husband, sooner or later he will blame her for his sagging thresholds and his loose hinges. Ivy Etheridge had been remiss; and, having also recently found her husband out, had been promptly told by her Edmund that it was her social ambition and her extravagance that had started him on the road to ruin. That, being not exactly new stuff, merely goes to show that a man may be—indeed, often is—old-fashioned without being virtuous.

But the bony foot above referred to was not Ivy's. It was something both more and less substantial. If Etheridge had reason to believe that somebody knew his guilty secret, he believed he had never had cause to consider his wife anybody. It had been very noticeably somebody who had called him on the phone tonight, however, and had asked him how much he'd give to keep the ownership of certain motion-picture enterprises a matter for strictly private discussion.

From which it may be correctly inferred that motion-picture film making was the most up-to-the-minute, highly speculative and thoroughly obscure investment Edmund could find for borrowed funds, and that somebody knew it.

AND when Etheridge had more or less pugnaciously and fittingly demanded to know with whom he was expected privately to discuss the matter, he had been told that he would soon be informed, with the added suggestion that he think it over.

There was nothing about this that loomed like the arm of the law, except perhaps darkly and well beyond the immediate screen foreground, and rather out of focus. But every crook, whether he admits it or not, knows that a masquerading Nemesis may take other

forms than blind Justice. She may even make up singularly like open-eyed Blackmail. And Edmund Etheridge had found himself suddenly in the position of the housebreaker who hesitates about waking up the family to ask protection from the dog.

In the panic that followed, the chilliest spot in his shivering consciousness was his ignorance of the blackmailer's identity. A dog whose teeth you can see is as nothing to a dog in the dark. This he discussed with his wife.

"It's somebody right here in the neighborhood—not long distance," he told her, after the preliminary fears as to whether central was listening in were temporarily laid on the table.

"Not Doctor Canter?" exclaimed his wife promptly. "It's that cat Mrs. Canter who's always kept me from——"

"Canter! No! He's president of the selectmen—and of the bootleggers' league. He'd send—an officer! He stands in with them!"

MR. ETHERIDGE gulped over that a bit. Now that he was talking about it, at last, he found it much less easy than before to be cynically amused at his excuses for his conduct.

"Then it's Earl Kelly!" exclaimed his wife. "We left the Kellys out——"

"Don't guess!" snapped her husband. "You could name over everybody you've a social grudge against and—— Do you suppose it could be Sam Clark? I fired him because he seemed to be getting too wise."

"It might be that young lawyer, Hippel, who thinks that no family tree not rooted in New England is——"

"I said, 'Don't guess!' You might as well suggest our neighbor here—young Tom Breck. Haven't you got something against Anabel Breck?"

"Breck! Well, I should think I had! That little snip! Why, she——"

"Yes! I thought so! Well, it's just about as likely to be Breck as——" Mr. Etheridge had been about to say "as Judas Iscariot," but something else besides the fitness of associated ideas stopped him. What was it he had noticed about young Breck lately? A sort of lack of frankness, was it? He used to be a rather outspoken young chap, before they took the house next door, that is.

"Look here——" he began suddenly again—and once more stopped short.

His wife looked. And between them they carried on a silent conversation rather more voluble than their earlier dialogue.

"But how could he know?" she asked at last.

"How could anybody know?" The embezzler's uncertainty was in no wise relieved, but he had been rapidly running over in his mind the last few remembered times he had seen Tom Breck. It seemed suddenly vivid among his recollections that the big young man with the pretty young wife had developed a curious manner whenever he had come into contact, or near contact, with his nearest neighbor.

NOW that he thought of it, just the other night, when that party of Baltimore young people were at the club, Etheridge had been startled by the sudden sense that he himself must conceal from them the fact that he knew their city well, because some of his quiet operations were going on there. It had been Breck who had turned the subject with stuttering suddenness and with a strange look at Etheridge, as if the Maryland city's name had guilty significance for them both.

Then that night at the Monsoon picture theatre. Had Breck seen him, Etheridge, in confidential talk with that little crook, Punk Sales, who was spying for him in the employ of Invincible Pictures Incorporated? Why had the Brecks sneaked in and past them in the lobby and up into the balcony, as if they themselves were up to something shady?

Of course, it was absurd, ridiculous, ludicrous, even to think of Tom Breck in such a connection or to associate such trifles with real fears. But then—it's hard to tell who is honest, these days—and a crook has always had that difficulty.

Fear is a powerful coloring matter when applied to guilty speculation. Of course these remembered incidents didn't mean a thing. But Etheridge could presently recall a dozen times within the past six months when young Breck had showed an extraordinary speechlessness or nervousness in his presence or upon his approach. Of course, Breck was not at all the type one would pick as a—hm!—a blackmailer. But what type would a really representative blackmailer be? Of course, Breck had no visible means of information as to Etheridge's invisible doings. But somebody had! Of course, Breck seemed as unlikely as anybody he could think of—yet he had thought of Breck! And, shuddering saints! Breck lived closer to Etheridge than anybody else, with unguessed and unsuspected opportunities for long and quiet observation. And Breck's otherwise inexplicable peculiarities of manner were certainly symptomatic of something!

"Have you noticed it, too?" asked his wife suddenly. And Etheridge jumped as if he had abruptly observed an evening star that was nickel-plated.

Suspicion in any soil is a plant of swift growth. But in a soil refertilized by the straw from a crop of misdeeds, and well harrowed by apprehension of recompense, it sprouts like hope—or the Phœnix. If it wasn't conviction Etheridge felt, as he contemplated his mental image of the tongue-tied Breck, certainly it was fear. And the fear was not minimized because envisaged. The dog was still in the dark, even if Edmund had guessed correctly as to whose dog he was.

With the not necessarily cooler second thoughts of a man who has everything he considers worth while at stake, Etheridge threatened his wife into vows of silence, and prepared to find out the truth.

THE Hopewells were giving an affair of some magnitude at the country club, and the Brecks arrived in their cozy little two-door sedan, owner driving.

As they sat in the car before going in, he listened conscientiously.

"Now, dear—do try tonight, won't you?" Anabel sweetly coached him. She had a dear way with her that always made him feel how truly salutary for him was her clear-visioned guidance.

"I most assuredly will," he promised. "I'll try to convince everybody I talk to that I'm up on his pet subject, and endeavor not to tell in any single sentence all I know about his most sensitive point. I'll try to make my family proud of me—by not dragging out any of our more disgraceful experiences for general inspection. I'll——"

"Don't joke about it, Tom, dear. It means so much to me. But do let other people know how clever you are. Blow your own horn a little—in a nice quiet way. You're the kind of over-modest man who needs to."

They went in together happily. Naturally, if Anabel thought him clever, there must really be something in it—for, past question, she was a clever girl. He was aware that it was flattered vanity that held his shoulders up this way now. But you had to have decent self-respect

to believe in yourself and all that. Besides, life was rather like roulette, anyhow; the only way to beat it was to have a system—and he felt comfortably assured that he had found one. You may be as honest and sincere and talented and decent as you know how, but it won't get you anywhere without a considerable tincture of bluff stirred in. Your competitor may also carry pure wools and fast colors; it's by your advertising you must outsell him.

He met Bing Hippel in the course of the early dances. Let's see—Bing's principal interests in life were the law and tennis. Very well—what were the taboos with him? Anabel had reminded Tom that he must be careful with Bing, because it had been he who had first suggested that Tom needed to put up more of a front — and she wouldn't for the world have Hippel suspect that Breck was following his advice.

"The trouble with you, dear, is——" began his wife, turning from her dressing table to look at him adoringly

Tom knew comparatively little about either tennis or the law. Consequently this consideration put a clamp instantly upon his tongue. Hippel borrowed a cigarette, remarked that the stars were out despite the weather man's pessimism, looked pained when Tom groped audibly for some common ground of interest, and then faded away with Elsie Bannister when the music started again, leaving Breck swearing inwardly at his own imbecility.

Billy Sankey brought Anabel up to him after the next dance. Billy was a yachtsman—and Tom naturally thought the Larchmont races would furnish an excellent subject on which Billy could expand. But he had no sooner begun to lead toward it, with a remark about the Catlin's new yawl, than Anabel was shaking her head warningly at him. He couldn't think why—nor anything else under the canopy, except that he was on the verge of some fresh conversational chasm. But when Billy bowed himself away presently, he learned quickly enough.

"Don't you remember—it was at Larchmont that Katherine Sankey had that racy affair with Mabel Catlin's cousin? I told you that Billy was terribly sensitive about that scandal."

"Oh, yes," murmured Tom. "I forgot."

She shook her head again, as she departed into a waltz, but it was a gesture of foreboding this time.

Tom reflected that his wife was good for him. If he was a bore, she was at least preventing his inflicting embarrassment and pain upon other people. Great Scott, what his long-suffering friends must have put up with from him before he was married!

He started to discuss the new pneumonia treatment with old Doctor Canter, but became suddenly aware that the subject was unfortunate, since Anabel had called in young Doctor Tredor this spring, when she had a touch of the flu. He began on California with the just-returned Fenwicks, and came to a horrible pause as he recalled Anabel's distress that she had not acknowledged the box of fruits they had sent the Brecks from San Diego.

By the Great Silver Sickle, this performance of his was nothing less than gumpish. But given the ingredients of a gump, how was one to achieve other than characteristic results! Why in the name of all that was ivory did Anabel ever allow him off the leash?

He wandered out into the porch at a later opportunity—and there came face to face with a sweetheart of long ago. Evelyn Lawrence, back from five years in Europe, a finished singer, but betrothed to a count or something. Anabel had said she would be here tonight, but Tom had forgotten.

"Lyn!" he exclaimed, with a sort of warming about the ligaments of his heart, despite the fact that, so far as his affections were now concerned, this star, once of first magnitude, was in total eclipse. And then he remembered how Anabel had looked when he had exclaimed this same abbreviation of Miss Lawrence's given name at the news of her homecoming.

His voice died in his throat. His hands, which he had impulsively extended to grasp both of Evelyn's—why, they had gone to primary school together!—his hands sank to parade rest beside him. His ideas abruptly dissolved, as things have a way of doing in hot water.

Lyn Lawrence's face had lighted up at sight of him. After his moment of feeble foozling that followed, she seemed to stiffen like something that crisps in an early frost. And Tom was presently left alone with a vague impression that he could see his breath against the June moon.

Great sarcophagi of the Genii! Was there nothing new and fresh that he could do? Nothing even really

cruel and unusual? Here he was, armed to the teeth, as it were, with his system, and he had not even had a chance to use it. System? The trouble with any system was that it provided for combinations which do not repeat! The trouble with his system was that it took two or more to play it—and he didn't know how to play!

It was while he was thus sitting out this dance with singularly unconversational success that he saw Edmund Etheridge approaching him.

He was still sufficiently aware of the more obvious facts in his environment to be conscious that here was his next-door neighbor—to whom he owed courtesy, if only because of that fact.

"Ah—you?" was the Etheridge greeting. It didn't sound over-cordial, Breck thought. But perhaps nothing from anybody would have had for him just then a friendly ring. Besides, Etheridge appeared to have sought a conversation.

"How do you do, Mr. Etheridge?" he managed.

"You seem—ah—to be playing rather a lone hand, Mr. Breck," said his neighbor, in the words of pat pleasantry, but with the effect of a thrust. He was a broad, somewhat squat man, Etheridge, and had eyes of a milky blue, like the mica in the old base-burner.

The remark roused Tom. Now here assuredly was a man to whom he could talk, who had a right to expect a cordial effort, at least, whose business was of a sort that any man might discuss in some aspect, and about whose affairs no inter-wifely fences had been built.

"There's two of us, then," answered Breck, determined to keep within the spirit of mild humor.

"Think so?" returned Etheridge, coldly unsmiling, but lighting a cigar as if he intended to remain where he was.

Curious reply, that, Tom thought. Well——

"This is—ah—your busy season, I suppose?" he inquired, with polite persistence.

"Eh? Oh, yes." The tone did not improve upon further acquaintance.

"Heavy receipts from investors? I often wonder how you handle the sharp influx of funds you must get about this time of year—what you do with 'em."

"Mm!" said Mr. Etheridge, seeming as uninspired as his companion. "You do, eh?"

Hmph! The man must think that line a little too intimate. Well——

"I saw a picture the other night that reminded me of you." Surely this old fellow's interest could be piqued by some normal means. "A movie, I mean—story of two young people building a house."

HE suddenly recalled where he had seen this picture. What perverse impulse had led him to mention the only film he had seen in recent years from a balcony? He stopped short, as if the last possible word had been said on that subject, and spent a long moment wondering what Etheridge would think of such banality.

"Well, go on," said the latter, presently.

Eh? Well, no wonder the man was waiting to make him show cause why he should not come to some point.

"Oh, that's all," he said, unable to keep the fury at his own futility out of his voice. And even to him, it sounded snarlingly offensive.

Etheridge looked at him narrowly. "Why do you think I am especially interested in—ah—in that picture?" he asked, as if the implication was highly objectionable.

"Why? I suppose for the same reason I should think your stockholders would be," returned Tom.

Etheridge took his cigar from his lips and stared steadily at Tom, as if doubtful of his sanity. Tom thought he was certainly touchy. What now could he take exception to? Or was he, Tom Breck, actually a little off center in some of his mental bearings? He was getting not only painfully self-conscious over this thing—he was getting disturbed.

"Is that a form of sarcasm?" inquired Etheridge.

"Why," said Tom, helplessly, "does it seem like sarcasm to you?"

Etheridge smoked slowly. Presently he took out his handkerchief and passed it over his forehead. Was the fellow actually embarrassed by this ghastly dialogue?

"Have you—ah—some notion in your own mind of—building a house, perhaps?" asked Etheridge presently.

That sounded better. "Why, yes," answered Tom, trying to be frank. "I've thought of it—when I can get the money to spare."

"Mm!" Again Etheridge was regarding him with a gaze that suggested fascinated appraisal. "Do you expect soon to—ah—get the money to spare?"

TOM tried a laugh, though the other's manner was downright annoying.

"Well, my ideas are set rather high, perhaps," he replied. "I'm not likely to build at once, unless I find a windfall—under the old apple tree or something."

Etheridge did not laugh. His face was as cold and as hard as snow crust.

"You choose to be facetious about it," he said.

That angered Breck. "Why shouldn't I be facetious?" he demanded, with a sharpness that surprised himself.

Etheridge seemed to consider the reasons for an instant, then he took a step closer.

"Do you expect me to be interested in your building?"

It seemed a gratuitous slap in the face to Tom. After all, there must be something back of this he did not understand—something into which he had put an inadvertent, unintentional, but none the less roiling foot. His own anger did not cool at this last remark, however.

"Why, yes," he answered, with sudden acidity. "Why not?"

Etheridge's face was near enough so that Tom could see it twitch now with a passion that seemed inexplicable.

"This is a bluff," said the man slowly, eying Breck as if he expected to awe him.

Tom slid from the rail where he had been sitting and stood erect. Whatever his offense, he did not propose to tolerate insult.

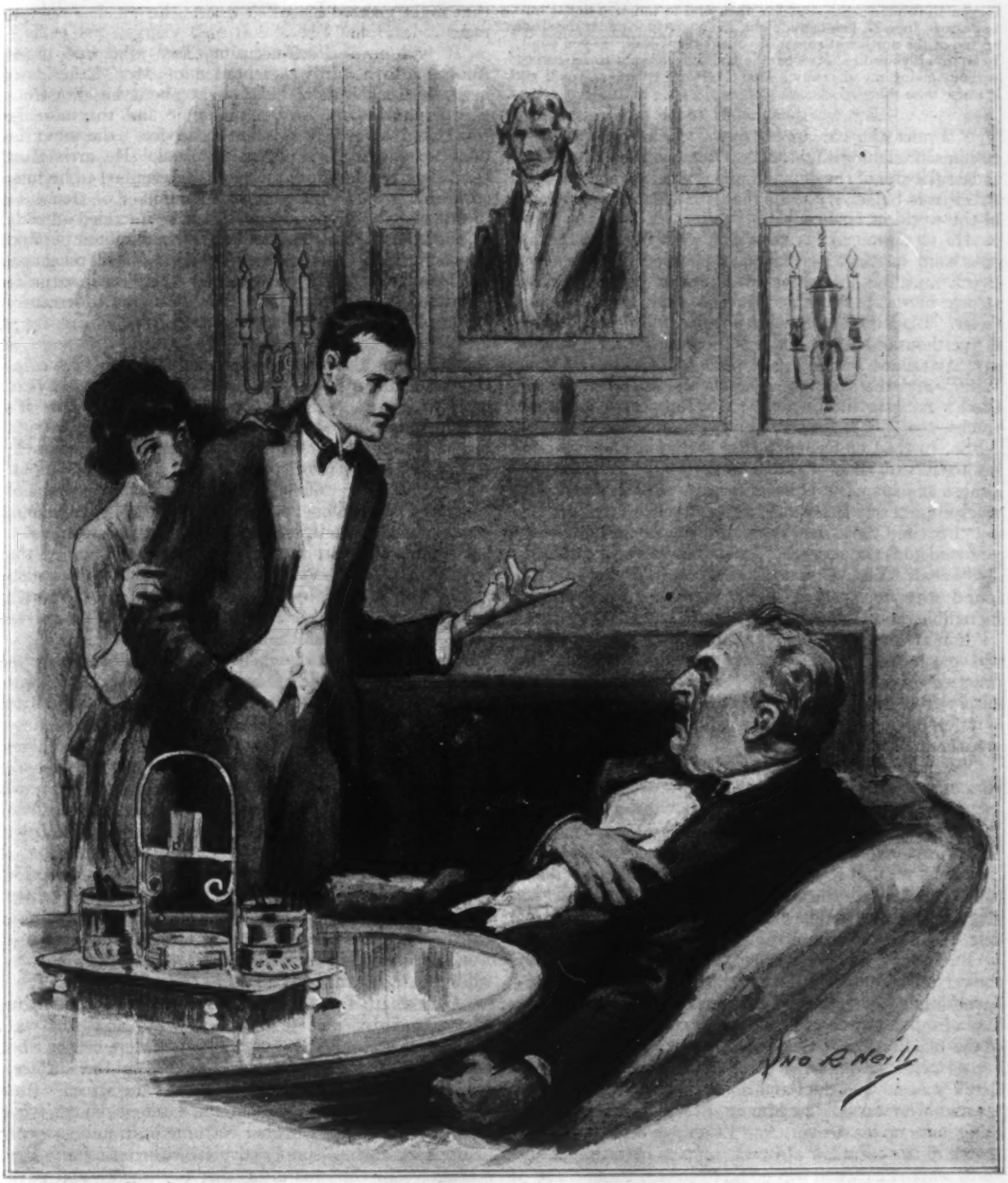
"Look here," he said, "it strikes me you take a peculiar line for a man in your position. You're badly mistaken in me if you think I'd undertake to bluff you or anybody in a matter like this. I picked a subject of conversation I thought might interest you. If it doesn't, you don't have to talk. If it comes to that, I'm not interested in conversation from you, either. You talk as if you thought I'd asked you for something you could refuse me. Well, you've got another guess coming!"

And with that he stalked away, and felt momentarily warmed, as if with a cordial. He hadn't a notion what could have caused this half-strange neighbor of his to be gratuitously insulting, but he himself, at least, had managed momentarily to break with his inhibitions. Maybe Sankey had been right—in order to feel a genuine self-respect you needed to insult somebody occasionally. Perhaps that was Etheridge's theory.

"But, oh, Tom," Anabel told him, when he later related the history of his evening to her, "the object of social intercourse is not to make people think you are either ugly or queer."

"It will never mean anything in my young life what Etheridge thinks," asserted Breck stoutly.

"You never can tell," returned his wife, brushing out her lovely hair. "Sometimes such things are much more



Just then Anabel came in and Etheridge eyed the two of them as if coupling them together in some dastardly attempt upon his dignity

far-reaching than you'd imagine," she ended musingly.

"That sounds cryptic," said Tom, putting the trees in his pumps. "Follow up that method and you'll achieve a reputation as a prophetess. It's sure fire."

"The trouble with you, Tom, is——" began Anabel absently.

"Sure! I'm just naturally not a mixer. I wasn't born to synthesize."

"But don't you see, dear," questioned his clear-eyed wife, turning from her dressing table to look at him adoringly, "you are too serious about it? The trouble with you, Tom, is——"

"That I don't deal in merry quips and lightsome badinage? All right, beloved. Next time I'll see how that goes. Next time I'll be funny—just as funny as my fix is!"

IT was the second or third morning thereafter that Etheridge, who was not sleeping well lately, anyway, found an early missive, typed, sealed, marked personal, and tucked inside his newspaper still on his doorstep. It seemed to fit into the general sequence of events with logical naturalness.

Now, you old coot, you've had time enough to think. It's up

to you to come across. Put five thousand in hundred-dollar bills tomorrow, June 27, before midnight, in an envelope under the stone on top of the northwest corner of your orchard wall. If you don't, I can tip off your directors where to find some of your frozen assets, without giving myself away. Don't try any tricks, or you'll get it worse than this.

"'Under the old apple tree!'" murmured Etheridge to himself, sighing slightly, now that he knew definitely at last the size of the demand upon him. "But I thought Breck was bigger fry than that. He'll never climb far in the world of finance."

He straightened his shoulders with more of the air of a solid success than had accompanied him for days. Breck must be something of a fool or he would have struck harder. Perhaps this was only a preliminary feeler. Blackmail is a habit-forming indulgence. But, if five thousand could hold off the parasite for a month, say, Astrallard Films, Inc., would see "Why Tell Your Wife?" and the said frozen assets would thaw. And—there's nothing like a good thaw for destroying one's tracks.

So, instead of feeling rather shriveled and old over his toast and marmalade that morning, Etheridge was almost as expansive as his wife was. For Ivy also had received an early letter, and was not yet in her stays.

"I invited those Brecks to our bridge here tonight, as you said to," she reported, "and they're coming."

"What? Yes! You don't say! Well——" Edmund found the unexpected news surprising, acceptable, incredible, and to be analyzed carefully.

It may have been observed that Mrs. Ivy Etheridge was more deeply interested in the social than in the practical or ethical aspects of life. Her husband had observed it frequently enough to count on it.

"I think you needn't worry about what I—ah—told you the other night, my dear," he said now.

"Worry? I'm not worrying. Not if this party of ours goes off all right."

ETHERIDGE did not seriously consider trying any tricks with the blackmailer. Even a trapped wolf can still bite; and if you haven't a deadly weapon about the house, long-distance feeding is better than coming to grips with bare hands. Etheridge felt only glad, at first, to know the size of the necessary ration.

But as the day grew older, he began to think that the very element of certainty in the situation which had relieved him was creating a new uncertainty that burdened him afresh. If five thousand dollars was the measure of the blackmailer, then it seemed less and less convincing as evidence that the blackmailer was Tom Breck. Breck was no five-thousand-dollar man. If Breck was the man who was holding him up, Breck must have something more up his sleeve. And Etheridge began to resent this; it didn't seem fair of Breck. It was irritating not to know where blackmail was going to stop.

In his office he reviewed his situation without finding reasons for increasing hilarity. He was a good deal spread out. His speculations in picture-making were carefully covered under other names than his own, but those other names did not include that of his Building and Loan organization. Besides, there was a little list of investments permissible for B. & L. Funds, and films were not on the little list. It looked as if "Why Tell Your Wife?" would be a very salable and popular film; a title like that would sell picturized patent-office reports. But there's many a slip 'twixt the flask and the hip—while this five thousand was like unto a debt of honor! The more he thought of this five thousand as a mere preliminary, the more dissatisfied he grew with the dispensations of Providence. And by the time he had that night greeted his wife's guests, he was a desperate man.

It had been a self-accusing Tom who had urged Anabel into a tardy acceptance of Mrs. Etheridge's invitation. The more he thought about his disastrous experiments at the last club affair and the more he considered his wife's consequent advice, the surer he became that she was right, as usual. He arrived at the Etheridge mansion, therefore, determined to be fully as funny as he could. He had a number of stories he meant to tell patly, a few good lines he intended adroitly to lead up to. Knowing that half the triumphant piquant effect of a spontaneous *bon mot* is due to careful rehearsal, he had rehearsed. His ready wit was therefore in saturate solution, like strong suds, prepared to bubble iridescently at the first breath through the pipe.

BUT it has always been a custom of the poets to compare humor to champagne. Even in these days of more or less muffled pops, one may still learn that it's only an accustomed head that can successfully carry a heavy load of either at a party. A little is a stimulant—too much has a narcotic effect.

Tom met old Colonel Anstruthers at the bottom of the stairs. The colonel was a rather severe old gentleman, who ushered at the Presbyterian church and possessed a smile that was hard to crack. Breck boldly tried the tooth-pastry-cook story on him—and the colonel continued to look at him with that same Sabbath calm with which, at morning service, he was wont to extend to Tom a velvet bag on a mahogany stick.

So Tom himself laughed with that abandon with which one relinquishes a hope, and sought other ears. He found a group of men smoking in the Etheridge morning room, and approached them with a qualmy determination. A strong scent of spice seemed to hang about this group, however, and Tom was in time to hear young Doctor Tredor finish a tale so utterly aromatic that he concluded that anything in his own repertoire would sound, after it, like an excerpt from "Pilgrim's Progress."

He wandered into the drawing-room and seized a moment of his hostess' apparent leisure to tell her subtly about the new feminist movement to give equal rights to weather hens and secure shorter hours for nightmares. But she only answered absently, that she for one was willing to leave all these things to the men.

After that, Tom danced with sweet, innocent little Kitty Enderby and imagined guiltily that she was shocked at the one about the motion-picture censor who thought that, if pictures were so bad on the surface, he'd like to know what went on behind the screen. But she came back with one about the barefoot dancer, who lost her vanity-case with her costume in it, and so went before her audience simply covered with confusion. Her manager said this was altogether too much—and gave her the air. Kitty added naïvely that it was enough to make a bath-mat blush!

Tom Breck concluded that, as a humorist, he was approaching staid middle age. He was nearing thirty.

But he found Etheridge finally, and was more than pleased that the man seemed to have lost any reason he might have had for resentment the other night. So he rose once more to the occasion.

"Did you ever hear the line of Scripture Mose Johnson quoted when he took his commission for passing the colored collection plate?" he asked brightly, after greetings. Then, as Etheridge shook his head: "'Let yo' light so shine that yo' right hand won't know what yo' left hand doeth.'"

"Ha, ha! Ha! Ha! Ha, ha!" said Etheridge, with

the rhythmic, but hollow-sounding mirth of a trap-drum.

Tom felt vaguely that this hadn't made a hit anywhere except in his host's sense of hospitality. So he tried another one he liked.

"Or the one about Abraham Washington Bones, who found a flask of whisky in the deacon's hen house and redecanted some of it, internally, before starting for home across a plowed field? He made a very crooked path in the soft earth, and when he got to his own home dooryard, with a chicken under each arm and the flask in his pocket, he looked around anxiously." Tom felt that he was getting attention now, and went on, encouraged: "In the foggy dawn he saw the fuzzy black zigzag of a snake-fence stretching darkly back toward the deacon's, and he dropped on his knees. 'Oh, Lawd,' he prayed, 'Ah'll give these here pullets to the preacher, an' one-tenth o' this here hootch to the poor, ef'n you'll just send down a li'l' cloudbust and wash away them there black tracks o' mine!' "

"HA!" exclaimed Etheridge, his mouth opening and his head going back—but with his eyes clinging to Breck's face. "Ha, ha! Funny!"

Somehow his reaction didn't seem exactly normal; but Tom was encouraged.

"Ha, ha!" he began cheerfully once more. "Have you heard the question the young burlesquer asked the old comedian? 'How's the best way for a young actor to take off an old crook?' 'It's simple enough,' was the answer. 'Get something on him.' "

Etheridge's jaw dropped. Tom wondered if this one was too subtle for him. He tried to put the right amount of encouraging expectancy into his waiting grin. But no laugh came from his host. Instead, his mouth settled into grim lines.

"I'll hand it to you, young fellow," he said, his eyes glittering with something strangely like hatred. "You're clever!"

That was exactly what Anabel had already told him; but Tom was unsure yet whether he might set this down to flattering confirmation of his wife's opinion. And at that moment Anabel herself joined them. Etheridge suddenly eyed the two of them, as if coupling them together in some dastardly attempt upon his dignity, snorted and walked into the library in evident dudgeon.

"What did you say to him?" asked Anabel in distress.

"I don't know. I just told him a couple of stories," returned Tom, his hopes of success as a raconteur crashing about his ears. Apparently he had again offended this inoffensive neighbor of his. "I know one thing, though," he asserted suddenly. "I'm through being a humorist. I'll never be funny again as long as I live, no matter how cute I feel! I'm going to stop trying to be something I am not. I'm going to be me—and if folks don't like me, they'll have to live with their own taste. I'm going to be honest and frank and truthful. I'm going to play the cards I hold, let the chips fall where they may!"

He left her rather flat—and closed the library door from the inside.

"Look here, Etheridge," he said, "it's time you and I understood each other."

Etheridge turned on him like something with genuine bristles.

"Is five thousand your—your limit?" he stammered.

"My limit!" echoed Tom, completely at a loss. "What's the idea?"

"Don't—don't stall! You can stick to your line of talk about—about house-building, if you like. But—out with it—what's your price?"

Amusement struggled with amazement in Breck's soul.

"I don't know whether you're crazy or not, man—but I'll humor you till I find out. Is that what you mean by talking of 'five thousand'? Is that the way you size me up?"

"How much, then?" snapped Etheridge.

"Well, if this is the time, the place and the way you choose to find out, suppose we say—twenty thousand."

"Twenty—thousand!" The Building and Loan manager stood repeating the words separately and silently, with moving lips. Then, abruptly, madly, "I won't do it!"

He wrenched open a drawer of his desk and threw out upon the table a package of new, crisp, hundred-dollar yellow-backs. They were bound with a Manilla tape, on which were the bank's figures—$5,000.

"There, confound you! Take that! It's all you'll get!"

The realization that this was neither jest nor petty pique, nor even incipient madness, began to force itself through the clouds of preoccupation in Breck's mind. He picked up the money and stared at it, then at the man across the big table.

"Take it?" he repeated. "It's money! Why the devil should you be offering me money?"

Etheridge's face was pale and twitching. With a horrid abruptness it grew yellow and still. The man's lips loosened—his lids and his nostrils sagged. He made a queer sound like a cluck in his throat. Then he sank forward on his hands on the table and gasped at Breck.

"Aren't you—weren't you—blackmailing me?"

For a long moment Tom Breck stared at the ghastly visage facing him, while a lurid light seemed slowly to illumine all that had passed. At last he straightened, looked down at the money in his hands, then turned and walked quietly to the door. Outside, two men he knew stood talking in the hall.

"Doctor Canter," said Tom, "you and the judge come in here a minute. Something has happened."

"WELL," he told Anabel at home that night, as he put the trees in his pumps, "anyhow—what with his property here, his house and his lots, and what they'll probably save out of his picture stocks and all, the stockholders may eventually get most of theirs. That's what interests me."

"It's not what interests me, Tom," said his wife, coming over to sit on his knees. "The thing that interests me is that you were so clever. Just think—I never dreamed that you were just playing a game all this time, a deep game—when you only seemed to be so stupid!"

"Eh?" grunted Breck.

The temptation was enormous, but he resisted it manfully.

"Look here, Anabel—it was no cleverness of mine. It was simply because some other crook was trying to blackmail him. As I told you, if I've learned anything by this ambiguous adventure, it's not to try to appear something I am not. People are going to know what I am, what I do and what I think. If they like me, it won't be for what I pretend! As you once said, you never know how far-reaching a thing like this may be. Honesty is just safety first! I'm going to take a leaf out of Etheridge's book, turn it the other side up—and be honest—even with my wife! Hereafter, when I think you are wise and beautiful, I'm going to say so in plain terms. Likewise, if I ever think you are short-sighted—or short-waisted!"

"Oh, Tom! You don't!" gasped his wife.

"Don't what?"

"You *don't* think I'm short-waisted!"

She clung to him for a moment, speechless, then slipped quietly down upon the snow at his feet. "May le bon Dieu bless all widows!" murmured Achille, fervently. "I love them all!"

Between the Gray Rat and Red Rodrigue Chivalry Comes High

Luck of the Snows

By William Merriam Rouse

Illustrations by L. F. Wilford

ACHILLE PATENAUDE felt that the devil had given personal attention to his affairs. It was an honor not to be desired. Achille stopped the Tiger, his mammoth yellow-and-black sled dog, and sat down upon the sled to marvel at the perspicacious ingenuity which the evil one had displayed in this present matter. To lead an innocent young man on by means of a perfectly disinterested desire to help the widow and the afflicted! And then, for that good action, to shoot him off into space!

Achille Patenaude had no place to go, and he was on his way there as fast as he and Le Tigre could travel. It was necessary that he should keep going, for death was only an hour or so back along the trail—death in the person of Théophile Hendrie, the Gray Rat of Rivière du Fer, a man most abominably notorious for the perfection of his vengeance. No swashbuckling pretender, but a hairy-chested scoundrel who had proved that he would slip a knife between a man's ribs if it seemed necessary to do so.

Ahead lay countless miles of wood road, going on and on to the choppers' camps of the Laurentians. A road of frozen snow, little more than half broken out. Behind lay many miles of the same road, leading down to the shores of the St. Lawrence and the villages of the older parishes. To right and left were forests, ravines, ever-climbing foothills, all covered by six feet of soft snow through which a man could not travel at all without snowshoes. Patenaude had no snowshoes with him. He had nothing except the clothes he wore, his good dog, and the sled. That is, nothing he wanted. He had the tin box containing the little fortune of the Widow Grondin, but heaven knew that he did not want the fortune of the Widow Grondin.

Yesterday he had been a happy young man, as strong and graceful as a panther, not unfavorably looked upon by the demoiselles of Rivière du Fer, earning good wages as an ice cutter. Today he was a fugitive, with death at his heels because of the accursed tin box which his conscience would not let him get rid of. Indeed, things had now gone so far that he doubted whether it would save him if he were to turn the money over to Hendrie with a smile and his best bow.

The night before, Patenaude had been going home late, after a pleasant evening. And then, as he passed the lonely house of the Widow Grondin, his peace and happiness were wrecked.

A light flashed up in the house, the clear night was startled by a shriek for help, and Achille burst in with as much boldness as if he carried a weapon. It was this very boldness which saved the money of the widow and at the same time involved him beyond hope of extrication. Patenaude saw the back of a big fellow who was engaged at the moment in choking Madame Grondin while at the same time he pried her fingers from their grip upon the tin box. Achille seized the poker from the stove and laid it twice over the head of the robber, but without more effect than to send him reeling across the room.

Through the next few seconds things happened swiftly and without thought. Instinctively Madame Grondin thrust the tin box into the hands of Achille, the robber recovered himself and as he did so he drew a revolver with one hand and a knife with the other. Patenaude leaped out of the house with the crashing sound of a shot to speed him and dashed for the road where his dog and sled waited for him.

He had good legs and their natural power was not diminished by the fact that he had recognized the grizzled and saturnine countenance of Théophile Hendrie, known as the most desperate character out of jail along the whole length of the Côte de Beaupré. They called him the Gray Rat, with peculiar aptness. Patenaude flung himself upon the box with which he had increased the height and carrying capacity of his sled and shouted to the Tiger.

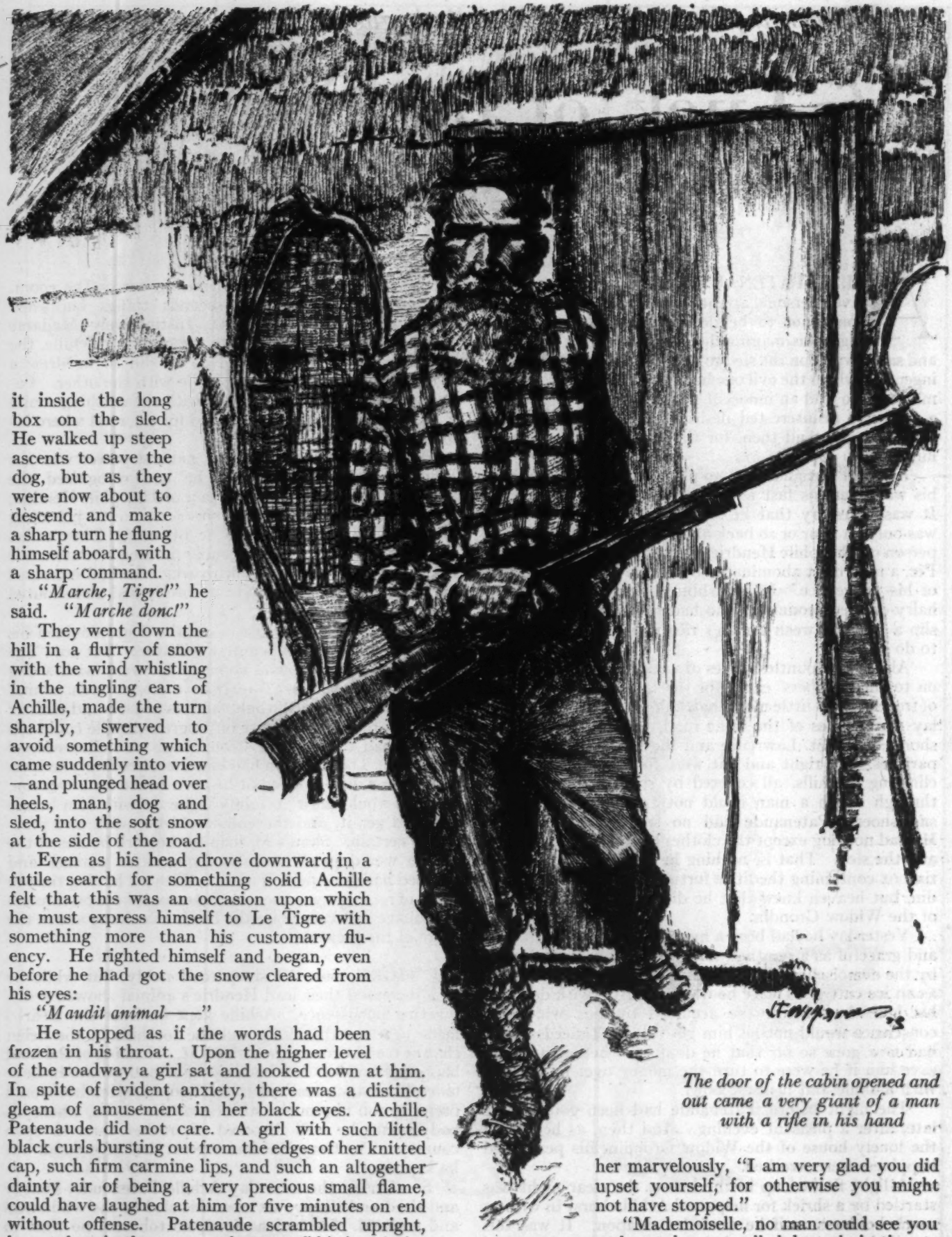
He thought he was safe when the Tiger doubled his legs under him and broke into a wild run. But no! The unspeakable Hendrie had come to his work with a dog and sled and he took the road a dozen rods behind Patenaude. In the starlight he was a dark and sinister blot only, but from his rate of progress Achille could tell that he had a large and strong dog. A bullet whined overhead. The situation had become exceedingly serious.

If Patenaude stopped at his own house for a weapon, Hendrie would most certainly come up with him before he could get it, and the end would be quick and practically certain. Shouts for help to the dark houses of the village would produce results long after pursuer and pursued had gone past, if at all. Without having time to think of remote consequences, Patenaude kept on through the village and turned up the bluffs that hung above the shore of the great river.

LE TIGRE took the steep road nobly, but while he increased their lead Hendrie's animal showed a disquieting persistence. Achille kept on over the cleared fields between the bluffs and the foothills in the belief that he could tire out the Gray Rat. Nothing of the kind happened and by the time the night had grown an hour older Patenaude realized that Théophile Hendrie would prefer to rob him in the stillness of the woods, where his body could be well disposed of, rather than in open country. The Gray Rat lost a great deal of ground, but he kept on.

So at noon the next day Achille Patenaude, hungry and tired and sleepy, sat upon his sled in the wilderness and groaned. He had no food, no tobacco, no time to make a fire, and no end in sight.

Ultimately Achille knew that he would reach a camp; but that might mean nothing in the way of help. More often than not the choppers were without firearms and the Gray Rat certainly would not hesitate to hold up a camp of half-a-dozen men, if he found it necessary. Patenaude took off his coat for faster traveling, tucked



The door of the cabin opened and out came a very giant of a man with a rifle in his hand

it inside the long box on the sled. He walked up steep ascents to save the dog, but as they were now about to descend and make a sharp turn he flung himself aboard, with a sharp command.

"*Marche, Tigre!*" he said. "*Marche donc!*"

They went down the hill in a flurry of snow with the wind whistling in the tingling ears of Achille, made the turn sharply, swerved to avoid something which came suddenly into view —and plunged head over heels, man, dog and sled, into the soft snow at the side of the road.

Even as his head drove downward in a futile search for something solid Achille felt that this was an occasion upon which he must express himself to Le Tigre with something more than his customary fluency. He righted himself and began, even before he had got the snow cleared from his eyes:

"*Maudit animal——*"

He stopped as if the words had been frozen in his throat. Upon the higher level of the roadway a girl sat and looked down at him. In spite of evident anxiety, there was a distinct gleam of amusement in her black eyes. Achille Patenaude did not care. A girl with such little black curls bursting out from the edges of her knitted cap, such firm carmine lips, and such an altogether dainty air of being a very precious small flame, could have laughed at him for five minutes on end without offense. Patenaude scrambled upright, breast deep in the snow, and swept off his jaunty fur *casque* in a gesture disarmingly apologetic and admiring.

"Mademoiselle," he said, while the Tiger floundered about, his feet in a tangle of harness, "pardon me, if you please, for annoying you by upsetting myself in this so utterly crazy fashion!"

"Monsieur," replied the girl, in a voice which fitted her marvelously, "I am very glad you did upset yourself, for otherwise you might not have stopped."

"Mademoiselle, no man could see you and not be compelled by admiration to stop!" he assured her, gallantly.

Tiger scrambled back into the road, dragging the snow-covered sled. The girl blushed. Patenaude remained bareheaded, while frost threatened to nip his ears. He now perceived that she sat upon a snowshoe, for protection from the snow, and that the

mate to it lay near by, smashed beyond hope of repair.

"That is why I am glad you stopped," she said, although not ungraciously. "I cannot travel even in the road without them. I slip and fall and stumble. I am not strong like you, monsieur. I am tired out, but I must go on. I must! And I cannot go on without help."

Achille Patenaude shivered with something more than physical cold. Getting the girl to the nearest camp, wherever that might be, would greatly diminish what chance of escape he might have. Nevertheless, one cannot refuse aid; certainly not to such a beautiful girl as this one. The longer he looked into the troubled depths of her eyes the more certain he felt that it was worth while to flirt desperately with death.

"I will take you north to the nearest camp with the greatest pleasure in the world," said he. "You shall ride and I will run behind. You will be able to get a new pair of snowshoes and——"

"Ah, monsieur!" she interrupted. "I cannot go north! No, not one step north! It is as much as my life is worth to go north!"

"Name of a name!" gasped Achille. "It is as much as my life is worth to go south!"

She cried out at that, and clasped her mittened hands together with every appearance of despair.

"Rodrigue Bugeaud will certainly kill me!" she moaned. "And you also, for that matter, monsieur! It is impossible for us to go north!"

"We cannot go south, I tell you!" persisted Patenaude. "Nor can we stay here. I know what I am talking about. The Gray Rat of Rivière du Fer is—well, he is chasing me! I have no weapons! Mademoiselle, he will kill me and take you with him. You would much better be dead!"

"You don't know Rodrigue the Red!" cried the girl. "He is ten of your ordinary scoundrels! *Mon Dieu!* With my own eyes I have seen him cripple a man for life! He has beaten me until I am black and blue from my neck to my heels! He will kill us both. That is the beginning and the end of that!"

"*PARBLEU!*" muttered Achille. In a measure he was stunned; and at the same time he was thrilled with new courage and determination. He forgot his hunger and fatigue. Under ordinary circumstances it might have taken him a week to fall in love with this girl of superlative charm; with her life in danger and her soul in great distress, it did not take him a quarter of an hour to find out that he was willing to die for her. He knew that it was genuine because he wanted to marry her. Never had he felt like that before. And, feeling thus, he stood very nearly helpless between the unknown Rodrigue and the Gray Rat.

"This father of yours——" he began, after a moment of silence.

"Father?" echoed the girl. "I wish it were no worse than that! I am Mariette Bugeaud. He is my husband!"

Achille Patenaude sat down upon his sled. It might be said that his legs gave out and sat him down. Certainly the evil one had laid him by the heels, as he had assured himself from the beginning. Even if he succeeded in saving her and himself from death in two directions, there would be no hope. There was no longer any brightness in the sunlight.

"*Eh bien!*" he shrugged, at length. If the devil had decided to use him for a particular form of complicated torture he might as well make up his mind to it. "Do you think, madame, that this husband of yours, this amiable man, would be content to kill me and let you go?"

"By no means, monsieur! Are you mad? First he will kill you and then he will beat me thoroughly. If I have the good fortune to die, I shall escape from him more surely than I did this morning. Otherwise, he will see to it that I never have another chance to escape. And that will be worse than death!"

"Madame Bugeaud," said Achille, when she had finished, "I understand now and I will do what I can. As for me, there is more concerned than my own hide. In the box on my sled there is a sum of money belonging to the Widow Grondin of Rivère du Fer which I had the good or bad fortune to save from the robber, Théophile Hendrie. I have to look out for you first, next for the money, and then for myself. Of the two dangers I will take your husband. That he has beaten a woman does not prove that he is a fighter. Me, I am a fighter. I shall go ahead. You will go with me. If we have the bad luck to meet Monsieur Rodrigue, then while he and I are killing each other you will take my dog and sled and the widow's money and go on with all speed. That is all I can say. *Allons*, madame!"

MADAME BUGEAUD began to cry softly.

"But, monsieur," she sobbed, "I do not want you to be killed! Already I feel as though—as though—you were my brother!"

"Nor do I want to be killed, rose of the north," replied Achille, sadly. "However, it seems more than likely that I shall be. So let us be cheerful! You are married—and what good would it do me to live?"

"Oh, *mon Dieu!*" She lifted her face to the beautiful pale sky of winter. "I am finished!"

"No!" Patenaude straightened out the harness as he talked. "If Monsieur Rodrigue kills me, and you escape from Hendrie, you may have the good luck to see your husband hung! In that case there will be scores of young men eager to marry you. Be happy. Me, I am a dead man already."

He put her on the box, sang out to Le Tigre, and they started. Achille pressed the Tiger, on account of the delay. They talked little; there was too much to think about. Three times within an hour Achille tightened his belt over a stomach so empty that the very hide seemed to stick to his ribs. But he did not neglect to keep a sharp lookout both ahead and to the rear.

It was mid-afternoon when the girl told him that beyond the next hill they would come in sight of her *cabane*. Patenaude stopped and breathed both himself and the dog. They had to pass it because without snowshoes they could not leave the road and go around. She could offer no explanation as to why her husband had not followed her, unless he had taken the wrong direction and gone north. The good color left her cheeks as Achille made ready to go on.

"Everything is with *le bon Dieu* now!" she murmured.

"*BIEN!*" exclaimed Patenaude, with more cheerfulness than he felt. "*Le bon Dieu* and I will attend to everything, madame! I am now going to wrap you in my jacket and slip you into this box on the sled which, as you perceive, is open at one end. It is a large box and you are most beautifully small. You will fit there neatly. You will be able to hear what is going on, and to see something. If I am stopped by your husband or any one else, do you get yourself out at the first chance and escape with Le Tigre, who is a very good and gentle dog in spite of his looks. Keep cool and pray for good luck. That is all I can say, most beautiful one!"

He lifted her hand and kissed it. That he allowed himself, although she was another man's wife, because he did not expect to live many hours. Streamers of red waved in her cheeks. She managed to smile bravely at him, although he knew she was frightened, when he put

her into the box and made her as comfortable as he could.

Patenaude drove on, rounded the hill, and saw lying before him the *cabane* Bugeaud, a small structure of logs with various sheds clustered about it. Smoke came from the chimney, which meant that the master of the house either was there or had been there very recently. Achille urged Le Tigre forward, leaped upon the sled, and hoped with all his heart that five minutes later he would still be going north unhindered.

Again the unspeakable luck of Achille Patenaude appeared, grinning like a hungry wolf. The door of the cabin opened as he approached it and out came a very giant of a man, whose brush of fire-red hair skimmed the top of the doorway and whose red beard spread out like a fan over his bulging chest. It could be no other than Rodrigue le Rouge. He held up one hand, and as he carried a rifle in the other Achille felt that he had no choice about stopping.

"WHO are you?" demanded Bugeaud, when the Tiger had come to a halt in front of the cabin door.

"Me, I am Achille Patenaude, of Rivière du Fer," replied Achille, thinking hard and fast as he spoke. "I am greatly pressed for time, monsieur. Is it that you desire anything in particular of me?"

"Urf!" grunted Bugeaud, sweeping Achille with a pair of greenish-gray eyes. "First I want to know if you have met a woman—an ugly little black devil of a kitten of a woman?"

"Truly, no! I have not seen any such woman. You—have lost one of that nature?"

"My wife, merely," replied Bugeaud. "She has run away again, and this time I shall probably kill her and save trouble."

"Ah, well," said Patenaude, "I have none of these annoyances for I am not married. *'Revoir*, monsieur!"

"Not so fast!" cried Rodrigue, lifting his rifle. "There's something about you that takes hold of my interest. A man does not travel into the woods as fast as you and that dog have been traveling without excellent reason! What was it? A fight? It may be that there's a little money to be made out of you, my friend! How close are the officers?"

Rodrigue le Rouge shot these remarks at him in an evident attempt to draw signs of guilt; and out of Patenaude's desperation was born an idea which might, at least, result in saving Mariette. He decided to admit his guilt. It was not hard for him to shiver, for what with cold and hunger and fatigue he was keeping his feet only by an effort of will.

"Monsieur!" he blurted out, as he dug out the tin box from beside the blanketed feet of Madame Bugeaud. "If you will give me a little something to eat and send me on I can pay—I can pay extremely well. Do not, I beg you, interfere otherwise!"

"Ho!" cried Bugeaud, eying the tin box. "I begin to understand! And how many are there on your trail?"

"Only one, monsieur!" replied Achille, managing to shiver still more. "But he is a most desperate character, well armed and of the courage of a bulldog!"

"Come in," growled Bugeaud, standing away from the door. "Put that tin box on the shelf behind the stove and help yourself to beans and tea."

Patenaude did as he was told, and when he had progressed to his second plate of pork and beans and his third cup of scalding tea he began to feel the warmth of returning hope.

"It is necessary that some one should persuade this man to go back, monsieur," he said, between mouthfuls. "Me, I am unarmed."

"Name of a dog!" snorted Red Rodrigue, contemptuously. "You talk like a priest and I'll bet my life that you never took that box if you had to fight for it! *Sacré!* I'll do your fighting if I'm paid for it! How much have you got in there?"

Bugeaud strode over to the shelf, lifted the box, shook it, and fingered the little padlock. He grunted with pleasure.

"Persuade him to go back!" he laughed. "I'll persuade him to stay here until the last trump! I eat these fellows who think they can fight! Sometimes, my child, I eat them alive!"

"This man is called the Gray Rat," Patenaude told him, with a show of anxiety. "He may be here at any moment, and I am not eager to see him!"

"Bah!" Bugeaud gave a hitch to his belt, from which hung a sheathed hunting knife. "If he were a dozen men I might take him seriously. As it is, I shall probably break his neck over my knee!"

"You are a terrible man, monsieur!" murmured Patenaude, with as much appearance of fear and admiration as he could muster. "Without doubt, a most terrible man!"

"Without doubt I am," agreed Red Rodrigue, "and several people are going to understand it before long! This Gray Rat has eaten his last meal and smoked his last pipe. As for my wife, she's too good-looking. I shall pull her teeth out so that she'll stay home and work after this!"

"*Dieu Seigneur!*" exclaimed Patenaude, and this time his horror was not pretense.

"The Gray Rat will furnish real sport perhaps," continued Bugeaud, vastly enjoying himself, "but with a slender fellow like you it would be no more than the wringing of a chicken's neck. A mere twist and a squawk!"

Achille understood the situation perfectly. Bugeaud meant to finish the Gray Rat first, as the more trouble-

some, and deal with him at his leisure. This was what Patenaude wanted, if it would but work out that way.

A throaty growl and a volley of barks from outside the cabin stopped a cup of tea halfway to his lips. Rodrigue turned, with a hand on the hilt of his knife. The door shook at a kick and Bugeaud sprang to open it.

He opened the door and at the same moment leaped backward so that a good six feet of room was left between him and the man entering. Théophile Hendrie stepped over the threshold without hesitation, but with great caution. In one hand he held his revolver, in the other a long knife. He stopped and flashed a glance of hatred at Achille, but Rodrigue le Rouge received the compliment of his close attention.

After all, it was amusing. There was Bugeaud, eager for a fight and still more eager for the widow's money. The Gray Rat wanted the money first and the life of Patenaude afterward. Achille desired no blood, but he was willing to cross the threshold of death to insure the safety of Mariette Bugeaud, and he had already balanced himself upon that threshold for the money of Madame Grondin.

Patenaude spoke with apologetic gestures. "Mademoiselle," he said, "pardon me for annoying you by upsetting myself in this so utterly crazy fashion!"

"*Sacré!*" roared Bugeaud, after a moment's pause. "Do you always go into the house of a stranger like a robber?"

"ROBBER?" cried Théophile Hendrie, boldly. "Who's a robber? That fellow there is the robber! I can guess what lies he has been telling you, perhaps, but the truth is that he has stolen the savings of a lifetime and I have followed him day and night for the purpose of cutting his heart out!"

"I suspected that he was a robber!" Rodrigue le Rouge stroked his beard with a glimmer of some purpose in his cat's eyes. Patenaude felt a sinking of the heart upon which Hendrie purposed to operate. Was it possible that Bugeaud was going to let the Gray Rat save him the trouble of killing Achille?

"*Tiens!*" exclaimed Hendrie, impatiently. "This pulling of your beard tells me nothing at all! Do you know of any reason why I shouldn't make this fellow give up my money?"

A smile came into existence behind the whiskers of Rodrigue Bugeaud. Patenaude glanced at the rifle standing against the wall. He could not reach it before Hendrie could reach him; and both the others were between him and the door. He moved a little nearer the box of firewood—better a club than nothing—and hoped fervently that Mariette had gone.

"Ho!" roared Bugeaud, suddenly giving vent to his amusement. "Do whatever you like to him, my friend! There he is, shivering behind the stove and growing paler every second! I would suggest that you put up your gun and wring his neck, for I am certain that no man ever owned a whiter liver than his!"

The shaggy, gray head of Hendrie swung from Bugeaud to Achille, and back again. He was probably not so well convinced of Patenaude's cowardice, but on the other hand he did not want to offend this roaring Rodrigue until he had finished the first part of the business. Neither Bugeaud nor Hendrie, despite their fierce airs, seemed to want to fight two men at once. The Gray Rat dropped his revolver into the pocket of his coat and shifted his knife into his right hand as he advanced toward Achille.

"Where is the box, scoundrel?" he demanded, between clenched teeth.

"If I give it to you," asked Achille, backing away toward the woodbox, "what then?"

At that instant the eye of Hendrie caught sight of the box upon the shelf and he gave a shout of triumph as he sprang toward it. That was too much for Rodrigue le Rouge. The back of the Gray Rat was toward him. His knife flashed to his hand and he leaped forward with a quickness astonishing in a body so gross. Hendrie, no doubt warned by his guardian spirit from the infernal regions, turned in time and they met and locked together.

Achille Patenaude left the tin box upon the shelf and broke for the door with a single backward glance. He saw the two men milling together, saw the knife of Bugeaud descend in a bright arc, and then he was outside the cabin with the door shut behind him. There he stopped. Both Le Tigre and the dog of Hendrie were gone, with the sleds.

He had told her to save herself, and it had been the part of good sense for her to take the other dog in order to hinder pursuit. This was what he had wanted, and he would not have had it otherwise. Nevertheless, the brightness went out of the day as it had done back there on the trail when he had learned that she was married.

What of him, now, and the money of the Widow Grondin? Patenaude stood coatless in a temperature of at least twenty degrees below zero; with no dog, no snowshoes, no weapons, and again with no place to go. He might get on to another camp and save his life, but the box of money was back there in the cabin. A crash sounded within. In a few moments one or both of them would be looking for him, and that *would* be the end.

Achille Patenaude touched the bottom of the abyss of despair. Of what use to save himself, since Mariette was hopelessly married? He might as well keep on trying to do a good job for the Widow Grondin. He would go back after her money and get himself put out of his misery.

"My curses upon the woman's money!" he growled, as he turned toward the door. "Upon all money! Upon beautiful women! All widows and charitable impulses of the heart! Here is the end of Achille Patenaude!"

"Monsieur!" A voice caught him and jerked him around. He stared into the flushed face of Mariette Bugeaud, just appeared from beyond the corner of the cabin. She wore snowshoes and carried another pair which she dropped at his feet.

"Quick!" she panted. "They are on the floor in there knifing each other—I just looked in through the window at the back of the cabin! Hurry!"

At noon Achille Patenaude, hungry and tired and sleepy, sat upon his sled in the wilderness and groaned

"You!" cried Achille. "I thought—you had gone!"

"But no, monsieur! As soon as this Gray Rat of yours was safely within the house I drove both dogs away and hid them in the woods! Then I came back to get all the snowshoes of Rodrigue from the shed! Now they cannot follow us! We are safe! Make haste, and we shall be clear away before these monsters finish their fight!"

For a few seconds the weight of Achille Patenaude swung from one foot to the other as he was pulled by desire to flee with Mariette and harried by remembrance of the money of the Widow Grondin.

"Widows!" he groaned, at last. "May the devil take them all! Hide in the woodshed for a matter of five minutes, madame, while I see whether I can get that accursed money! And if I have bad luck, do you start on snowshoes. They can't follow you if you carry the extra ones!"

"More fighting!" she cried. "Oh, *mon Dieu!* Will there ever be an end of this?"

"There'll be an end within five minutes!" promised Achille.

Then he ran to the rear of the cabin, snatching up a solid hickory stake from a sleigh as he went. Cautiously he looked in through the window.

He was in time to see the end. The Gray Rat was just rising from the floor. He staggered, but after a moment he got his feet solidly under him again. There was blood upon his head and upon the front of his sheepskin coat, but it was apparent that he was not disabled. Rodrigue le Rouge, the giant boaster, lay still upon the floor; his knees drawn up and his arms flung out helplessly. Théophile Hendrie turned toward the door with his red-bladed knife in hand.

The instant that the latch dropped into place behind Hendrie, Achille smashed the window pane with his stick and launched himself through the opening. His hands laid hold upon the rifle of Rodrigue Bugeaud just as the Gray Rat leaped back into the room.

They fired at the same instant. Achille had dropped to one knee as he raised the weapon and to that he owed his life, for the bullet of Hendrie fanned his cheek. Through the mist of smoke he saw Théophile Hendrie reel backward and fall motionless.

Achille Patenaude rose and turned to aid Rodrigue Bugeaud. A touch, a glance at Rodrigue le Rouge, and he drew back with a great breath. He heard the latch click and rushed to the doorway to meet Mariette.

"It is finished, Mariette," he said. "Hendrie is wounded and helpless and—you—you are—a widow!"

"A widow!" she whispered. "You did not kill——"

"No!" cried Achille. "The Gray Rat fired at me and sent a bullet through the head of your husband."

She clung to him, speechless, then collapsed.

"May *le bon Dieu* bless all widows!" murmured Achille, fervently, as he lifted her in his arms. "I love them all!"

At midnight three brass bands blared at the moon that swam gloriously above the Browley residence

Eddie Arrives

In Spite of Youthful Curls and a Reprehensible Interest in Prize Fighting

By L. H. Robbins

Illustrations by O. J. Gatter

EDWIN DOANE'S doting mother kept her son in curls until his thirteenth birthday. She hoped it would prevent him from running with those very ill-behaved, rude boys whose hair was cropped with clippers, burglar style.

It did.

At the story-hero age of twenty-odd he still paid for the maternal indiscretion. He was still "Eddie" to his fellow townsmen when he should have been plain "Ed" or dignified "Edwin J."

Polite Ashland smiled at him, remembering the ringlets. Amiably Eddie smiled in return, having learned that good humor is the readiest armor.

Seeing his easy smile, Ashland said he would never be the strong, metallic man of affairs his banker father was.

In a critical town a rich man's son is austere, or he is an oyster.

No one knew how passionately Eddie Doane yearned to be convincing, accepted, respected, not even Berta Browley, the last and best beloved of his numerous best girls.

As Supervisor of Physical Equipment at his father's bank he was a model of punctuality and industry. Personally he saw to it that the revolving doors were folded back the minute the temperature outside rose above sixty-five. He also looked after the cut flowers in the ladies' department, arranging them gracefully in vases with his own hand each morning.

But he looked beyond the bank for opportunities to be really helpful to the human race. The newspapers were ever lamenting the dearth of high-class men in public affairs. He thought of the diplomatic service, in which his Grandfather Jordan had acquired merit.

Mrs. Doane abetted him in this dream. "When father was Minister to Portuguay," had long been her open sesame to society. To be able to say, "My son in the State Department, you know," would be equally advantageous.

Family pressure upon Washington brought the promise of a post for Eddie. Then some one there was reminded, or informed, of those damning curls and that hope went glimmering.

Undaunted, Eddie joined the Civic Welfare Association and went in for a Better and Brighter Ashland. Nicely educated in music, he promoted community singing on the courthouse steps, until, one famous night, while leading "The Long, Long Trail," he was beset by miscreants and converted into an animated omelet before the eyes of the assembled populace.

The Ashland *Evening Telegram*, always sensational, estimated that a gross of eggs had left their mark upon him. The conservative *Bee* put it at a mere one hundred. The *Bee* called the outrage the work of hooligans. The *Telegram* traced it to a high-school fraternity recruited from Eddie's own social set; which came to the same thing, in a way, yet was harder to bear.

He went right on defying the ridicule of an ungrateful republic. His letter to the *Bee* on the Victory Loan will long be quoted. The *Bee* printed it in the funny column. He came out for the League of Nations, and was all but expelled from the McKinley Club. To support the League in Ashland one had to enlist under the black flag of Democratic Boss Malcomb Cooger, with whom the McKinleys were not on speaking terms.

Other episodes of Eddie's remote past might be shown with relish. There was his disastrous effort to provide his city with a professional baseball team. There was also his celebrated collision with the Black Maria, or police wagon, laden with a relief squad of traffic cops, the day he drove his new racing car on its maiden trip down High Street.

But let a kindly curtain be drawn over these pictures, since Eddie—or shall we say Edwin J. Doane?—is now Director of Public Safety in the Ashland city government and a person of consequence whom all delight to honor.

To relate how he arrived at eminence is the business of our story.

Chapter II

EDDIE DOANE hopped out of his sport roadster—crimson body, white wheels—in the late-afternoon shadow of the dignified residence of J. Barr Browley. Shaking his Palm Beach suit into smart lines on his plump person, he entered the house.

Once in his courtship of Miss Berta Browley he had buzzed the bell and waited suppliantly. Nowadays he ran right in.

The Browleys were at dinner. He heard their voices in the dining room as he paused before a French mirror in the hall to adjust his tie.

It occurred to him that the table talk had a slight grind. The lubricant of urbanity, plentiful as a rule in the Browley domestic machinery, seemed lacking. He heard the stentorian bass of J. Barr Browley, head of the Browley Brass Works, president of the Ashland Board of Commerce, a citizen without reproach. Mr. Browley spoke in the tone of a prominent man who has suffered base insult.

"A little thing! The paper makes me a town joke, and you call it a little thing!"

"But, father, why blame it on Eddie?" This was the spirited soprano of Miss Berta. "My goodness! Is Eddie an Utter Egg?"

"The whole town calls him one."

"Not when I'm around!"

"Bertie, dear!" came faintly from Mrs. Browley.

"I don't care, mother."

"If your father thinks Eddie did it, we know he must have a reason."

"But, mother, would Eddie do a dishonorable thing like that? He simply couldn't. He hasn't it in him. He wouldn't know how."

"Look at the facts," Mr. Browley broke in stormily. "I bring together a select dinner company to discuss the public affairs of Ashland privately. In the sacred shelter of my home, under the pledge of confidence, my guests speak their minds. They say what they think of Malcomb Cooger. They urge me to run for mayor and kick the Cooger gang out of the city hall. Next day the Cooger-controlled *Telegram* prints their language word for word."

The young man in the hall coughed self-advertisingly, but Mr. Browley thundered along.

"Who was here last night that would go leak to the paper like this? Was it Harrington, with his paving contracts? Thomas, with the land he wants to sell Cooger's school board? Check 'em all off. The only one who had nothing to lose is your precious pinhead, Eddie Doane!"

Here the pinhead took up a book from the hall table and dropped it to the floor. It made scarcely a sound.

"Summer novel; too light," he thought plaintively.

"Eddie has as much to lose as any of them," Berta declared valiantly. "Mr. Cooger keeps loads of city funds in Eddie's father's bank as a favor to Mr. Doane. When he learns that Eddie was here conspiring with you all, won't he draw them out?"

The banker's son resolved upon flight, yet lingered spellbound as a sudden recollection fired Mr. Browley's wrath anew.

"Confound him! He's a Democrat, the same as Cooger. Why was he here, anyway? Who invited him?"

"Nobody, of course. He just happened in. And let me tell you this, dad: If the rest were pinheads like Eddie, with the nerve to fight in the open for what they believe, instead of a lot of old 'fraidies all tied up and inhibited by their interests, you might be elected," she ended defiantly.

"What did that pumpkin ever fight for?"

"The League of Nations, for one thing. He made cart-tail speeches all over. In his automobile."

"Under Mal Cooger's auspices!"

"He isn't a Democrat, at that. He's an independent Republican."

"Independent turncoat! If he comes in tonight, I want to see him."

At this cheerful juncture Eddie made a great stir of tripping over a rug and came in.

Genially he beamed upon the startled family.

"Evening, all," he chirped.

Mr. Browley returned an impressive scowl. Mrs. B. dabbed her eyes. Their daughter, as petite and pretty as she was plucky, gasped the young man's name in anxious astonishment. Their handmaiden, Mary Ellen, auburn-haired, ordinarily calm and capable, was so taken aback by his entrance that she let the finger bowls on her tray jump and jingle and spill.

Mr. Browley thrust a newspaper under his nose.

"Have you seen that, sir?"

In the noisy first-page headlines of the *Telegram* Eddie read:

HIGHBROWLEYS PLOT
COOGER'S DOWNFALL
Peeved Fourth Ward Fashionables
Nobly Decide to Rule City
Hereafter

"Any idea how they got hold of this?" Mr. Browley demanded.

"Why, no," said Eddie, blankly.

"Have you talked to anybody on the *Telegram* since last night?"

A slow flush spread over Eddie's round face. He felt nervously of his tie. He parted his lips twice before sound came forth.

"Yes, I have, sir."

"May I ask what about?"

They were all so solemn, especially Mary Ellen, wide-eyed behind Berta's chair, that Eddie had to laugh.

"You were at lunch today with Lawrence Barg," Mr. Browley accused. "Barg is Cooger's nephew and works for the *Telegram*. I saw the two of you at the table in the alcove under the stairs. Isn't that true?"

"Yes, sir."

"I ask you once more: What did you talk about?"

Serious now, Eddie looked Mr. Browley in the eye.

"Really, you know, without consulting my lawyer——"

"Since you broke in upon my private conference you have communicated with the *Telegram*. You admit it?"

"Something of the sort, yes."

"Very well! Stay away from my house after this, will you, please?"

Berta's "Dad, have a little sense!" was wasted.

"You needn't come around any more. We may hold other meetings here. We don't care to have you dropping in."

Dashing the newspaper to the floor, Mr. Browley strode past the victim of his displeasure, a stately figure matching his house. His likeness to George Washington had more than once been pointed out.

Berta piloted Eddie through the hall, opened the door for him, put his hat in his hand.

"Bother old politics!" she complained. "We haven't been in it twenty-four hours yet, and look at us already!"

They paused on the piazza.

"But you didn't tell the *Telegram*, did you?"

"I'll tell the world!" he averred.

"Then who was it? Somebody heard everything. They print even what mother said."

He grasped the top of his cranium—his habitual attitude when thinking deeply—and was silent.

"The dining-room windows," he murmured finally.

They went around to the side of the house. Under the windows a bed of petunias bloomed. No mark of a reportorial foot was visible among the tender plants.

"You looked almost noble when you stood up to dad," Berta confided. Plucking a blue-and-white blossom, she decorated him for valor. "It doesn't match your tie," she deplored.

"Thanks all the same," he sighed. "Cherish it forever. In an old book."

"And weep over it sometimes?"

"They always do."

"Silly! But you did talk to some one on the *Telegram*, Eddie. Dad saw you."

"Only Larry Barg, the sporting editor. I had him to lunch."

"What for?"

"Oh—to talk."

"About dad?"

"Well, come to think——"

"Eddie! You know Mr. Barg is Mr. Cooger's nephew!"

"But I never mentioned last night. We merely discussed the fight next week, and Pink Flynn, and so on, and so forth."

Light dawned for Berta.

"I see. You talked with Mr. Barg about Mr. Flynn, your pugilist friend. And you told him dad doesn't like you to keep such company. Is that it?"

"Precisely," said Eddie, relieved. "That is the only way stern parent was mentioned. Word of honor."

"Then why not simply tell him so?"

"While father is torn with angry passion? Simply not on your life, my child."

"Why not, Eddie?"

"He would want to know everything. I should have to tell him. No resistance at all."

"You looked almost noble when you stood up to dad," said Berta, and she decorated him for valor

EDDIE applied a handkerchief to his troubled brow. Berta's brow was troubled, too. Reticence was unusual in her impulsive young man.

"What do you mean by 'everything,' Eddie?" she asked anxiously.

"You see, I handed Larry Barg a little roll to place for me on Pink Flynn. You can't place Flynn money here in Ashland. It's Flynny's burg; the whole crowd's

for him. You have to go outside to find Blake money. And Barg knows people in Baltimore—Blake's town. Don't you see?"

"You are betting again," she chided.

"But look who I'm betting on. Pink will eat that Baltimore bird alive in three rounds. Ask anybody in Ashland."

It was not a month since her father had warned the sportive Eddie that the Browleys had not raised their daughter to be a wastrel's bride.

"Eddie, aren't you ever going to settle down and be proper?"

"When I've lost my girl and everything?"

"Pooh! What are you doing tomorrow at four?"

"Pressing my flower."

"I shall be walking out West Street along the park, watching for a red roadster with white wheels that looks like a funny insect."

"Must make a note," Eddie observed brightly.

Something drew their gaze to the dining-room casement. Framed therein, a picture, Mary Ellen, comeliest of servants, viewed the parting of the lovers. There were tears of pity in Mary Ellen's romantic eyes.

Chapter III

OF all the young women in whom Eddie Doane had taken an affectionate interest, Berta was the only one who had never made fun of him. This evening she had even defended him; she had defied her father to call him an Egg. Berta was a Brick. To reward her faith in him he determined to turn detective and find out who had betrayed her crusading parent to the mischief-making *Telegram*.

Driving slowly away in his red roadster, he recalled to mind the guests at Mr. Browley's political dinner, one by one: Luther Thomas, Harry B. Harrington and the rest. All, all were honorable men. All abhorred notoriety.

It could scarcely have been Browley himself, pleased though he had been to be chosen as their champion. He had refused to accept the leadership of the movement until certain interests absent from his table should have been sounded out and pledged. Secrecy was essential at the start, the whole company had agreed.

"Was I the leak, after all?" Eddie wondered.

He had lunched at the McKinley Club that day with Lawrence Barg, the worldly-wise young sporting editor of the *Telegram*. He had said to Barg, when Mr. Browley chanced to pass their table:

"There is a personal reason why I don't want this bet advertised in Ashland. There he goes now. Certain party thinks betting is a vice. Must never know, you know. Be most heart-rending, and so forth." Ignoring Barg's sagacious wink, he had continued earnestly: "Certain party mightn't understand that this bet of mine is not, strictly speaking, a common sinful gamble. Local pride, this bet. Stand up for Ashland. Support home industry. If we let those Baltimore fans come over here, find us afraid to back our man, give our fair city a black eye. Besides, a bet this size will have its moral effect on Blake, you say."

Through cigarette smoke the sophisticated Barg had replied that a bet of five thousand dollars on Pink Flynn of Ashland would assuredly fill the mind of Mr. Blake of Baltimore with doubt and anxiety, and aid in his hoped-for defeat. Readily Barg had consented to serve as steward of Eddie's roll and to find, through his sporting connections in Mr. Blake's city, an amount of money to cover it.

At no other time in their talk had Mr. Browley been mentioned, Eddie felt certain.

As he drove away from the Browley home this evening wondering who had informed the *Telegram* of the dinner party, he thought of possible light he might get from Barg. Perhaps Barg would tell him how the paper had come by its latest political sensation.

He stopped at a drug store and telephoned.

"Why, no, Eddie," came the drawling voice of the sporting editor. "I wasn't in the office when the—that is to say, I haven't been there since I saw you. But I'll inquire. Sure."

Now another happy idea occurred to the enterprising detective. He steered his red roadster toward the notorious Gas House district of the Second Ward and brought its white wheels to a stand under the lamp at the door of the Mal Cooger Athletic Club.

Here was one place in Ashland where he could count on the respect that men show their equals. The denizens of the Second Ward had never seen his curls. They knew him only as the wealthy friend and backer of their friend, neighbor and fighting hero, Pink Flynn.

In the gymnasium downstairs a lean, lithe young man in trunks was punching the bag. His hair was vivid red, his arms remarkably short. These two circumstances had influenced his life profoundly. Being red-headed, he had been obliged to fight since the age of three. Being short-armed, he had had to study the science of fighting in order not to be whipped. Today he could whip any man under the heavyweight class in the Gas House district, which is equivalent to saying in Ashland.

Aided and comforted by Eddie Doane, this queerly-constructed young fighter had toiled upward through the four-round, the six-round and the semi-final classes, to emerge in the limelight at last through putting one Packer Klein to sleep on the floor of a crowded barn in Jersey City.

Soon now the dream of his life was to be realized. Within a week the lightweight boxing champion of the Middle Atlantic States, a citizen of Baltimore, would come to Ashland on a professional visit. Pink Flynn would receive the distinguished stranger in a twelve-foot ring at the First Regiment Armory and endeavor to make his stay a memorable one.

Of Eddie Doane's many ventures in quest of opportunity to be helpful, Pink Flynn was perhaps the most dubious. Nice people, including Mr. Browley, considered pugilism a dismal comedown from the fair heights of diplomacy and community singing.

"H'lo, Pink, me lad," said Eddie, settling on a roll of mats near the bag puncher.

"Hi! Eddie," said Pink, and went on punching.

BY and by the rat-a-tat ceased.

"S'matter, Eddie? Sick?"

Eddie was clasping the top of his head.

"You oughta come down here nights and put on the gloves, Eddie. I'll train some o' that bacon off you." The boxer's face was freckled and merry.

"Pink," said the thinker, giving up mental effort as useless, "will you do me a favor?"

"After all you done for me, then will I do you a favor!" The red-haired stripling seemed aggrieved. He smote the bag wickedly.

"There was a dinner party at J. Barr Browley's last night," Eddie explained. "An anti-Cooger function. A cottage political meeting, so to speak. The *Telegram* got wind of it. Tonight they drag J. Barr's dignity all over the front page. They razz him something cruel."

"I should go into mourning!" Pink hooted. "That Browley, I love him the same as a snake. Didn't he can me out of his brass works once for soaking a foreman?"

"You and I are a canned pair," Eddie mourned. "I

was at the dinner. Naturally, therefore, he thinks I reported it for the paper."

"I'll swear to any alibi you name," Pink volunteered loyally.

"Will you lend me your political influence to find out who slipped this dinner to the *Telegram*? Mal Cooger probably knows; and you are close to Cooger, haven't I heard you say?"

"Close, is it?" Proudly Flynn swelled his muscled chest. "Ain't I his man in the district here? Say, I'm as close to Mal Cooger——"

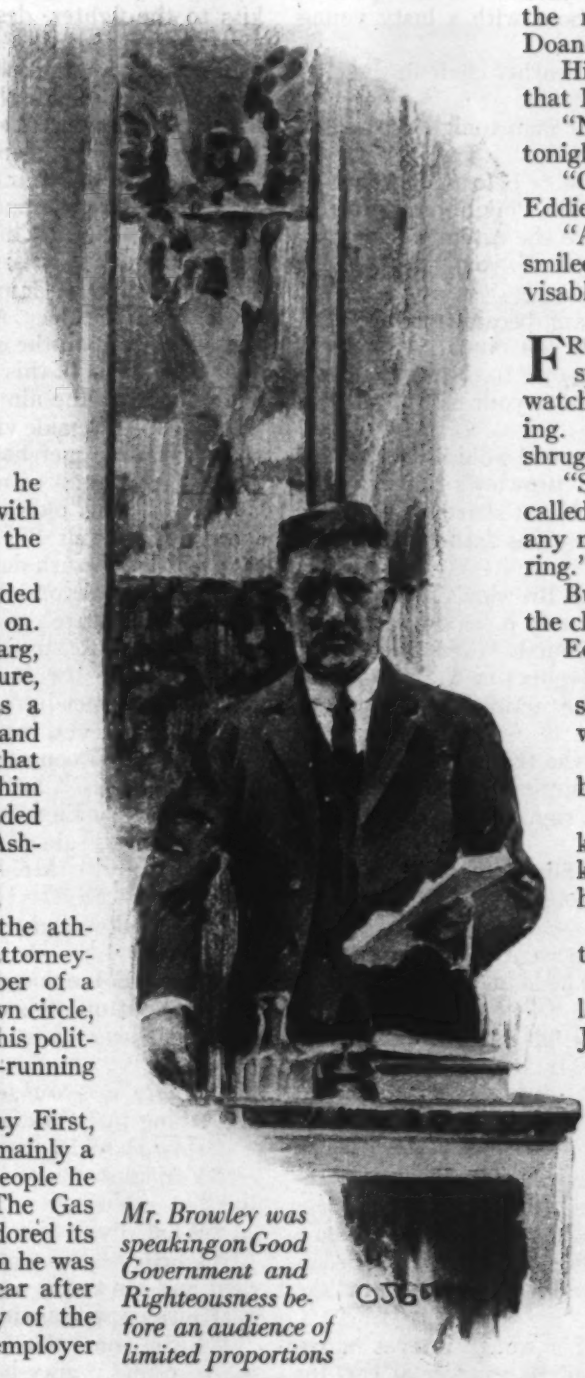
He did not tell how close he was. Instead, after a glance toward the gymnasium stairs, he swung upon the punching bag with ardor unaccountable, battering the leather until the room rang.

A pair of newcomers had descended the stairs and now stood looking on. One, Eddie saw, was Lawrence Barg, the sporting writer—a languid figure, cigarette in lips. The other was a person so small in stature, so bland of expression, so dapper in dress that none but the initiated would guess him to be the sinister, the vastly dreaded and deplored gentleman boss of Ashland himself.

"Mal Cooger!" Eddie groaned.

Seldom did Mr. Cooger visit the athletic club that bore his name. An attorney-at-law of high standing, a member of a notable old family, he kept to his own circle, as a rule. He did not need to till his political fields in person. His smooth-running organization attended to that.

To the people of the workaday First, Second and Third Wards he was mainly a name, a tradition, yet by these people he was followed enthusiastically. The Gas House district adored him as it adored its fighting boy, Pink Flynn. To them he was a demigod who delivered them year after year from the chains and slavery of the Fourth Ward, where dwelt the employer barons, the J. Barr Browleys.



Mr. Browley was speaking on Good Government and Righteousness before an audience of limited proportions

By the Browleys and their earnest friends he was regarded as a renegade who led the rabble against his own class.

THE boss and the editor crossed the floor to the bag puncher.

"Flynn," said Barg, "meet my uncle, Mr. Cooger."

The pugilistic idol of Ashland blushed to his collar bone.

"Pleased meecher, Mr. Cooger," he mumbled.

Shaking hands, the boss replied that the sentiment was mutual. Common report called him the most affable man in the state.

"I have heard a lot about you, Mr. Flynn; so much that I shall have to risk a couple of dollars on you next week, I'm afraid. Local pride, you know."

Over this highest of compliments Flynn grinned with delight.

"Say, Mr. Cooger, I just *gotta* win that fight now."

"You will, from what Barg says." The suave little boss turned to the young man on the mats. "Well! Well! Eddie Doane, eh?"

His tone echoed the local disdain that Eddie knew well.

"Not campaigning for Browley tonight, Eddie?"

"Campaign starts tomorrow," Eddie replied, rosily.

"An early start"—Mr. Cooger smiled astutely—"might be advisable."

FROM the stairs again, with the sporting editor beside him, he watched the work of the lad in training. Barg muttered comment and shrugged his thin shoulders.

"Stick around, Larry," Pink called after them. "Bunch be here any minute. Show you some sparring."

But the visitors went on up to the clubrooms.

Eddie's eyes twinkled.

"Well, Pink, me lad, you're not so frightfully well acquainted with his Nibs, after all."

In moral collapse Pink sank beside his friend.

"Honest, Eddie, I feel like I know Mal Cooger as well as I know you. I been his man down here three years. But——"

"You never met him until this minute?"

"Never. You see, Joe Holland's my ward leader. I go to Joe. He goes to Cooger. The orders is, Cooger don't want us little guys butting in. What I meant when I said I was close to him is, I feel close to him. And I am. I can get anything I want out of him—only, you understand," he added, humbly, "through Holland. I'll find out about this thing you want to know. I'll ask Big Joe tonight."

"And queer yourself with the organization, giving away their secrets?"

"I wouldn't do it for anybody else, Eddie."

"Then forget it, Pink. I won't ask you to do it for me."

For a minute Pink was silent with a new thought that seemed to have struck him. Perplexity hardened his good-natured face.

"This party was at Browley's house, you say?"

"Yes."

"No reporters present?"

"Nobody at all but the family and half a dozen guests."

"Did they have a caterer?"

"No; it was just a home dinner. Their regular maid served it."

Pink went on thinking.

Some of the "bunch" came clattering down the stairs; unshorn youths, noisy, joyously bellicose. Older men sauntered in after them. Pink Flynn's training was an

event in the district. Presently Eddie went upstairs, leaving his protégé in a fierce bout with a lusty young Italian.

Lawrence Barg lounged in a leather chair in the club parlor.

"Seen the spread I gave your man tonight?" queried the editor, as Eddie wandered in.

He had his newspaper on a table before him, open at the sporting page. There Eddie saw Pink Flynn's prowess advertised in pictures and text to the extent of columns.

"Fine, Larry. Mighty good of you. Now—er—about the other matter."

"Eddie, it's like this." Barg became confidential, with reservations. "I can't tell you much. I oughtn't to tell you a thing." He raised his eyes to the portrait. "If I spill a hint, will you keep it under your hat?"

EDDIE'S heart sank. What good would it do him to learn how the news of Mr. Browley's dinner party had reached the world, if he could not share the explanation with Berta and her acrimonious father? Still, he had better hear.

"Perhaps somebody was on to Browley's little game," Barg confided. "Perhaps somebody is good and sore at the slanders circulated in the Fourth Ward these days. Perhaps somebody had stenographers in the cellar of a certain man's house, listening for actionable language."

"Good night!" cried Eddie.

Aghast, he recalled some of the things that had been said at Mr. Browley's virtuous dinner table.

"Mind you," Barg finished, significantly, "I haven't told you a word."

"Thanks, Larry," said Eddie faintly.

He drifted out of the Mal Cooger Athletic Club in a daze.

Politics was surely fire. You went in to purify your city, and unless you jolly well looked out you were burned at the stake.

Driving his red car home, he felt glad, on the whole, that he had been excused from Mr. Browley's campaign.

CHAPTER IV

MARY ELLEN had concluded her evening housework by clamping down the lid of the fireless cooker upon Mr. Browley's breakfast mush. Seated now on the selfsame cooker, she reached for the extension telephone on its shelf near at hand. A moment later she picked up the receiver.

Her brows were puckered; her romantic eyes had a worried light in them as she waited, receiver at ear, for "Number, please?" No sooner had the query been spoken, however, than she returned the instrument to the shelf in silent haste as a voice from the dining room demanded to know what had become of that dashed newspaper.

Softly she retreated up the back stairs to her room on the third floor; a room as plain as a hospital ward, and as neatly kept. Upon her narrow bed she spread the missing journal.

She opened it at the sporting page, where a series of pen sketches showed Pink Flynn, the hope of Ashland, in pugilistic postures. A sort of halo that the cartoonist had drawn around his head indicated that his hair was red, even as Mary Ellen's. There was also a long printed piece telling how Flynn's body jabs in the clinches were bound to take the tucker out of Mr. Blake of Baltimore.

With her embroidery scissors Mary Ellen cut the bloodcurdling hero out of the page, and with a bar pin set with diamonds and rubies, sometime purchased at the ten-cent store, she fixed him upon the wall beside her mirror. Then she smoothed her auburn tresses, blew a kiss to the fighter, descended to the kitchen and went away to her evening's entertainments.

Her path led her into a part of town less refined than the Browley neighborhood; a district beside the river, where the spicy scent of petunias was little known, and the prevailing perfume emanated from that night-blooming flower of our civilization, the gas plant.

Beyond an unkempt row of tenement houses she came to an iron fence. Children clung to the grill, pressing their faces wistfully between the hard palings to breathe the good smell of damp earth and growing things that came from within. A lawn sprinkler was making it rain in there upon the only spot of verdure in the district.

In the midst of this oasis stood an old-fashioned house left over from the almost forgotten time when Ashland was a placid riverside village, inhabited chiefly by country squires, retired merchants, a Civil War general, and two gentle authoresses of moral tales for the young.

Here in this old-fashioned house a poet had dwelt. Here today dwelt Big Joe Holland, once a professional wrestler, later a fish dealer, now the Cooger organization leader in the Second Ward, and the husband of Mary Ellen's Aunt Kate.

Big Joe rested tonight on the front piazza, cooled by the breath of the lawn sprinkler, sheltered from the eyes of the street by a clematis vine; an enormous man, in his shirt sleeves, reading his evening newspaper in the glow of a lamp conveniently shining through a window.

"Who's this?" he barked, in a husky and fearsome voice, as Mary Ellen came up the walk from the gate.

"Just me," said Mary Ellen. "Anybody home?"

"Anybody!" Mr. Holland rattled his paper. "Ain't I anybody? Say!" He was only jollying, Mary knew.

She sat down on the steps.

"UNCLE Joe, have you read what the *Telegram* says about up at Browleys' last night?"

His answer was a gurgling sound, half snort, half chuckle.

"Where do you suppose they got it, Uncle Joe—everything just the way it happened, and all?"

"How should I know where they got it?"

"You know where if it was you that told them, Uncle Joe."

"What d'you mean, I told them?"

"I believe you took what I phoned Aunt Kate, and went and ran to the paper with it," said Mary.

He thumped on the window with his great fist.

"Kate, come out here. Mary Ellen's gone daft."

A round, gray-haired, spectacled little woman answered the summons, popping out at the door like a startled wren.

"Why, it's Mary! What's the matter? What's your big uncle roaring about?"

"She thinks we went and put it in the paper what she phoned you," Mr. Holland explained, with a show of heat.

"The idea!" cried his good wife.

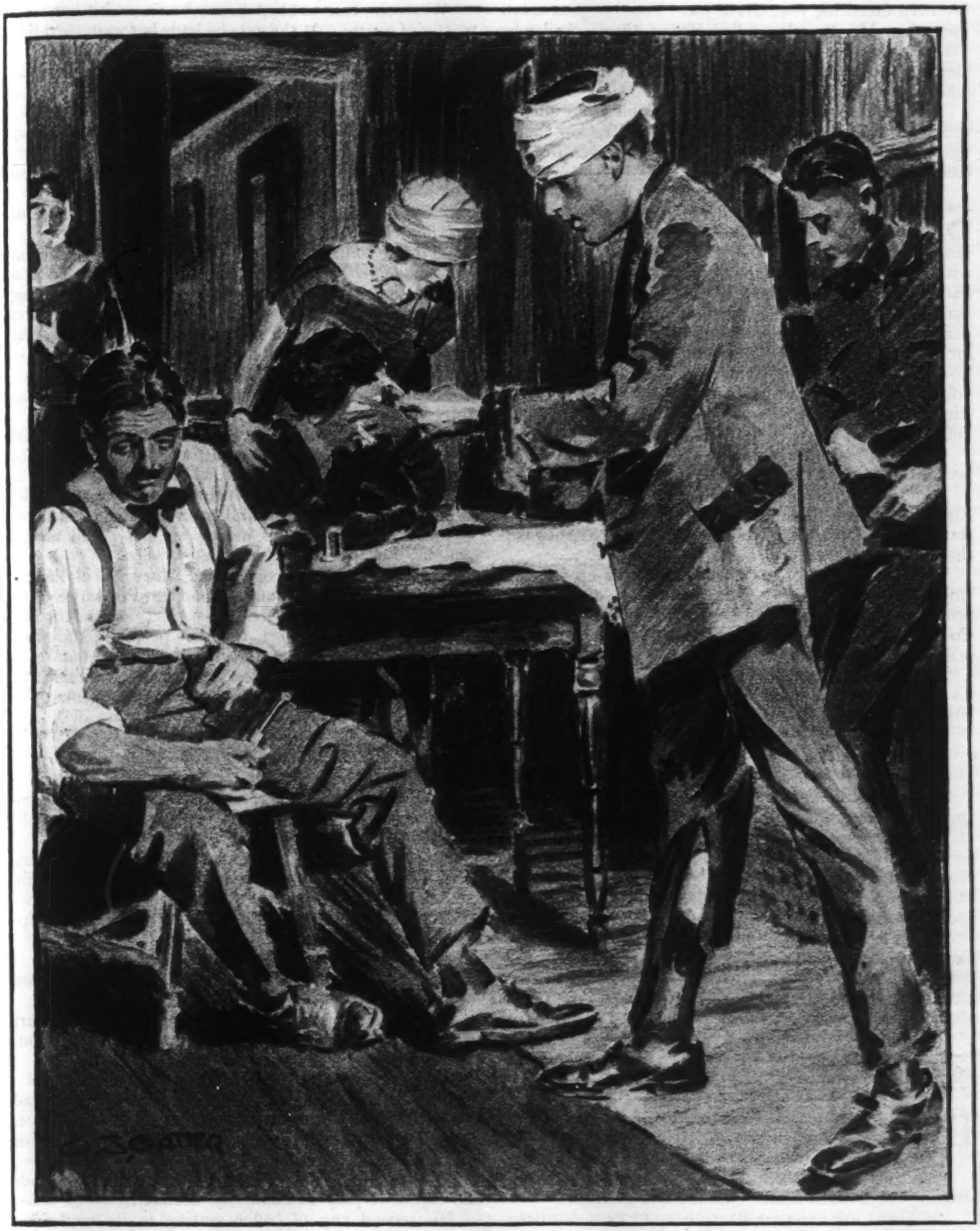
"I only phoned you for a joke," Mary Ellen persisted. "It was such a good one, those rich folks thinking they could get up a ticket and beat Uncle Joe and Mr. Cooger. But you did wrong to put it in the paper."

"Child alive, we did no such thing," the aunt declared.

"She's loony," the ward leader maintained.

"Your Uncle Joe has better things to do than run to the papers, my dear. And what if he did do as you say? Look what those swells called Mr. Cooger. Thief and boodler, and all like that."

"Yes," Holland put in, "and didn't old Browley call your best beau a thug? Pink Flynn is called a thug, and you feel sorry it's in the paper on 'em."



Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed so wonderfully as Eddie. Above, he resembled Mustapha Kemal Pasha. Below, Charlie Chaplin. He was flourishing a gleaming pair of pliers

"I'm not sorry, in a way," Mary protested. "Mr. Browley hadn't oughta be in politics. He ain't built for it. He will be like a lamb in a—in a concrete mixer. His wife hates it, and so does Miss Berta, so it would be a kindness to keep him out. He oughta be shown up, anyway, talking like he did about Mr. Cooger and the organization and all of us. Only you hadn't oughta put it in the paper, Uncle Joe, with me working there, one of the family, like. Don't you see? Besides," she added, "you don't know the trouble you made."

They listened while she told them of the woe that had befallen little Miss Berta and that grand good Eddie Doane, as a result of the *Telegram* story.

"Mr. Doane is the best friend Pink Flynn ever had,

not even excepting you, Uncle Joe. You'd oughta heard him when Mr. Browley called Pink a thug. And now Mr. Browley has run him off the place and broke Miss Berta's heart, thinking Mr. Doane put it in the paper, when it was me and Uncle Joe done it."

"Mary, it ain't so. He ain't that kind of an uncle," spoke Aunt Kate, with wifely pride. "There's things that even Joe wouldn't do in politics—not even for Mr. Cooger."

SHE had been Mrs. Holland only three years now. Before that she had been too busy mothering her dead brother's children, Mary Ellen and Louise, to bother with a husband. The glamour of her autumnal mating had not yet worn off. She still saw Big Joe as the truest man on earth. Joe looked terrible to the outside world, perhaps, but he would never betray a family confidence for all the bosses in the Democratic party.

"All the same, Mary, living up there on the hill among your swells, you don't want to forget who your real friends are. When your poor father was dying so long——"

"I know," said Mary gently. "Mr. Cooger got him a bed in the hospital."

"And had the organization pay for his funeral. Eight carriages, besides the hearse. A millionaire couldn't have been buried tonier. You want to remember them things, Mary."

"We gotta stick up for them that sticks up for us," Uncle Joe moralized. "And when a lot of powerful people start in to persecute a friend of ours like Mal Cooger, and lay their dirty plots to send him to state prison——"

Mary echoed the words in a gasp.

"They want to send Mr. Cooger to state prison, Uncle Joe?"

He nodded.

"I—I didn't know that."

"You'll know it fast enough, if Browley's elected."

State prison for Malcomb Cooger! Mary was appalled. The swell folk at the dinner party had not talked of criminal prosecution. Surely, though, Uncle Joe knew. He was Cooger's lieutenant in the Second Ward—the Bloody Second. Swiftly came another thought. If Cooger was in danger of prison, so Uncle Joe might be!

The gate latch clicked, breaking the long silence that had followed Holland's revelation. Up the walk to the porch came Pink Flynn, attired now for polite society after his evening exercise at the club. With him was Mary's flapper sister, Louise.

"I brung her home, where she oughta stay," Pink explained, with parental brusqueness. "These infants got no business out after dark."

LOUISE settled at the feet of the aunt who had reared her from babyhood.

"You'd think he was the truant officer," she pouted.

"She just went to the corner," Aunt Kate testified, stroking the bobbed head. "Louise is a good girl."

"I caught her vamping Larry Barg in Pennek's drug store," the censor affirmed. "A guy old enough to be her uncle!"

"Ain't he a friend of yours?" the flapper challenged. "Didn't he put you in the paper tonight? The pictures flatter you, Pink, I think, especially the one of your fighting face."

Pink dropped his athletic self beside Mary Ellen. For once he was sorry to find her at Holland's. He had come to interrogate the big ward leader about the *Telegram* article that had injured his friend Eddie Doane.

When she rose to start home, he rose with her, as a matter of course. At the gate he bade her wait. Striding back, he drew Big Joe to the dark end of the porch.

"What's the *Telegram* doing, printing all that on Browley, and Mary working there?"

"Well, why not?" Big Joe parried.

"Why not! Because there's one easy way they coulda got it, and that's Mary."

"D'you think Mary would take Browley's money and then sell him out like that?"

"No, I don't. But how else could they get hold of it?" he demanded.

"I'd like to know, myself," Holland declared, solemn as a judge. "Now listen, young Fireworks. Take a friendly tip. I asked her the same thing you're asking me. Just before you came along I asked her. Don't you go make the same break unless you want a worse fight on your hands than you'll have next week."

"I see," said Pink.

So Mary was not being used by her crafty uncle as a spy for the machine.

On the walk home he avoided mentioning Mr. Browley. But he mentioned Mr. Cooger. He spoke of Mr. Cooger with idolizing awe, as one might speak of a benign god. Mr. Cooger had come to the club this night on purpose to meet him, Pink Flynn, and shake his hand.

"And he's putting his money on me. Told me so himself. Local pride, he said."

Gratitude to Mr. Cooger filled Mary Ellen's heart. He had honored her young man. He was white clear through. Yet people called him a thief. Wasn't it sad how people got such notions about people! And they wanted to send him to state prison!

A wonderful idea had possessed her romantic mind in the last hour. Her favorite heroine was Joan of Arc, the peasant girl who saved a king.

CHAPTER V

EDDIE DOANE'S father wore a chilled-steel expression on his face when Eddie sat down at the breakfast table next morning.

"I saw your check yesterday," Mr. Doane began. "You have dug into your grandfather's legacy again. Isn't that about the last of it?"

"Riches have wings," Eddie returned cheerily, helping himself to the toast.

"What's the idea, drawing five thousand cash?"

"Little speculation," Eddie confessed. "Trouble you for the butter?"

"The *Telegram* says you are in politics with Barr Browley. Is a five-thousand-dollar campaign contribution his price for letting you in?"

"I'm not in politics with anybody, thanks."

It relieved Mr. Doane to hear that the *Telegram* had been misinformed as to his son's connection with a movement little better than crazy. He had no veneration for Mr. Browley as a candidate.

"The man might as well dash in at the Polo Grounds and expect to play baseball," he declared.

His second cup of coffee getting in its mellowing work, he discoursed sagely.

"Every so often," the banker philosophized, "a Browley offers himself as a sacrifice on the altar of patriotism. They slay him invariably. The itch for reform is a queer ailment. It singles out the hardest-headed business men for its worst havoc. Shun it, Edwin."

"Yes, sir," said Edwin, dutifully.

How truly spoke his canny sire! Look at innocent Browley, launching his campaign in the privacy of his

home—and Cooger stenographers in the cellar taking shorthand notes!

Forgetting politics, Eddie devoted his mind that day to banking. Escaped at last from the cares of finance, Eddie went to keep a social engagement that promised balm for his sore spirit.

Promptly at four o'clock the red roadster with the white wheels purred up to the curb in West Street beside the park, and Berta, trim in a new fall suit with fur and things on it, stepped aboard. By five the car had covered miles of pleasant country roads and returned its pretty passenger to a point within a block of her home.

"Tomorrow at four, again," said she, getting out. "Now are you sure I mustn't tell dad about the stenographers?"

"I gave my word," Eddie replied. "But lock the cellar."

A ponderous limousine slid up beside the roadster. A face dark with a grand-jury sort of frown looked out; an indignant hand flung open the door.

"Alberta!"

"Wh-why! Father!"

"Get in here."

"H-how do you do, sir," said Eddie, doffing his hat. He fanned his flushed face. "Quite a warm day, sir."

As a matter of fact, it was a bit chilly. Summer had gone.

Mr. Browley deigned no response. The limousine rolled coldly away.

On other afternoons the red roadster prowled out West Street along the park, but no Berta awaited its coming.

Hopefully Eddie called the Browley house on the telephone. The first time he got Mr. Browley.

"Er—is this Finkspieler's delicatessen?"

"No, this is not!" snapped Berta's father.

"Excuse it, please," Eddie mumbled.

Next time he was luckier. He got Mary Ellen.

"Yes, Mr. Doane, I understand perfectly. I'll tell her."

"What are you to say, now?"

"That all this makes no difference in your feelings, sir, and you love her better than her father does, and you will still help him get elected if it will make him feel better, and will she please phone or write."

"Tomorrow, Mary Ellen, I'll buy you a new hat for this."

She laughed. "I'll buy my own hats, if you please, sir."

"My rule too Mary Ellen, absolutely. One thing more, now."

"Yes, sir."

"Tell her I'm sending up some flowers, and if she will look in among 'em—— Are you listening?"

Was romantic Mary Ellen listening!

"In among 'em she will find a bunch of tickets for the fight. Maybe she can get her mother to take her—or some of her aunts."

Such a grand young man, even if he did intend to help Mr. Browley put Mr. Cooger in prison!

Chapter VI

THE untimely exposure of the conspiracy to rescue the city from Cooger tyranny did the reform cause more good than harm, after all. The cautious and respectable *Bee* took the new movement seriously, remarking that the head of a successful brass works was much better fitted to run the business affairs of the municipality than Cooger's man Kummel, who for years had done nothing but hold public office.

Pledges of support poured in upon Mr. Browley. Leading citizens wrung his hand in the street. Pastors of churches patted his shoulder, praised his courage, predicted victory. The Board of Commerce gave a dinner, Harry B. Harrington presiding. Before Mr. Browley knew it, he had become a hero and a candidate.

The city committeemen of his party had not elected a mayor in twenty years and never expected to elect one. Their usefulness was restricted to state and national contests.

Obliged to take notice of the tumult and the shouting, these gentlemen met to consider whether or not to yield the primary nomination to Browley and make a fight for him afterward.

There was no ardor in their chill council. Seldom had Browley greased the party wheels. Moreover, the absurdity of entering a green man, or a man of any color, in a race against Cooger's perfect machine was vividly plain to any one who knew the game. Mr. Browley's martyr resolve caused every Republican politician in Ashland to groan.

But Mr. Browley's neighbors in the Fourth Ward cheered. Theirs, the wealthiest ward in the city, was the worst served in all that made the tax rate high. It never did the Fourth Warders any good to send protesting delegations to the city hall. They had no friend there, with Cooger's gang in power.

HERE was a chance to right these wrongs. Here was a man of the despised and rejected upper classes who stood well with labor and was willing to undergo the frightfulness of a campaign against an entrenched ring; a champion who would restore the government to the hands of the intelligent minority, where, as we all know, government belongs.

Mr. Browley's name went up and down High Street emblazoned on luxurious pleasure cars. He was mentioned from the pulpit in the church that Eddie Doane and his parents attended. Men to whom politics were as hateful as a stream from a fire hose came out boldly for the shining new cause.

And women—here was the witchery that was to whisk Mr. Browley into office. The women had the ballot now. Mr. Browley represented the Home; Cooger's man Kummel the lodging houses, the pool rooms, the dens of vice.

Nobody in the Fourth Ward knew quite what a den of vice looked like, but it was generally understood that such things flourished in Ashland under the Cooger régime. These would now have to go before the electoral brooms of the house-cleaning sex.

Possibly most Fourth Warders when thinking of a den of vice had in mind the boxing carnival that was held in the First Regiment Armory one cool autumn night. That affair was the last straw the Cooger authorities had heaped upon the back of a figurative camel symbolizing the patience of the right-thinking element. Never before had an Ashland administration permitted prize fighting.

Undesirable characters swarmed from far and wide to witness the gory event. The fair name of Ashland was bruited about the land as that of a city depraved. The final bout, in which the lightweight championship of the Middle Atlantic States was at issue, turned out to be one of the most disgusting encounters since the World War.

Four times in the fifth round the champion had the local contender on his knees. In the sixth he smashed him quite through the ropes.

Yet the police stood by and allowed the challenger to come up gamely and battle on, groggy, half-blinded,

until the eleventh, when a derrick-boom swing of Baltimore Blake's right found the point of his chin, and the red head of the hope of Ashland struck the canvas and stayed there.

All this the papers of the nation told in repulsive detail—and Ashland had once been sweetly renowned as the home of Poet Stedford!

PUGILISM is a sad thing to discuss in a thoughtful political story, but I cannot leave off without reporting that strong men wept when they saw Pink Flynn take the count, there on the resined floor, struggling to rise for more punishment, sinking back helpless.

Tears streamed down the plump cheeks of Eddie Doane as he lugged the left leg of the limp hero away to the dressing room. Dampness of the same sort clung to the creases of the florid face of Big Joe Holland, who supported the hero's shoulders.

Eddie Doane wept not for the five thousand he had lost. He wept because a plucky little fighting man had been stopped in the supreme effort of his career and could scarcely be expected to fight so well again.

Yet he spoke cheerily when Pink had been doused and chafed into reviving.

"Pink, old boy, it's all right. You made a name for yourself tonight. You'll get that brute yet."

"Thanks, Eddie." The puffy-lipped victim tried to smile. "You been a good friend. I'm sorry I flunked on you."

He turned over on his side to sleep and forget. He had taken an awful drubbing.

There came a commotion at the dressing-room door. Voices were saying, "It's a skirt," and, "Run along, kiddo, you can't come in here."

Pink, on his elbow, demanded, "Who is it?"

Eddie, stepping to see, reported back in wonder: "It's Mary Ellen, the maid at Browley's."

"Let her in," ordered the fighter. And a moment later the girl entered.

She knelt down beside the bench and kissed his bruised face. His followers saw that she was a peach and that her hair matched Flynn's to a shade. Although many of them knew her, it was news to their world, as it was to Eddie Doane, that she was Pink's girl.

Just then big Joe Holland pushed his great bulk through the astonished crowd. He took the girl by the arm, lifted her up, drew her to the door.

"You get on home," he bade her; and when she was gone, "My niece," he growled to whom it might concern, and frowned upon all, as much as to say, "Let any man comment at his peril."

Thoughts trickled through the mind of Eddie Doane. Mary Ellen, maid in the Browley home, who had served the dinner at which Mr. Browley's guests spoke so freely regarding Mal Cooger, was the niece of Big Joe Holland, who looked after a large part of Cooger's political dirty work. Here was material to ponder.

His hand had stolen to clasp the top of his head, when he heard the voice of Lawrence Barg beside him. The languid sporting editor was condoling him, comforting himself the while with a cigarette.

"Hard luck, Eddie—rotten luck."

It may have been his worldly-wise smile that put bitterness into Eddie's heart.

"Luck! Where was any luck about it?"

Barg's smile faded a little.

"We were licked fair and square by a better man," Eddie went on sharply. "I'll tell you something else, Barg. If more truth about Blake and less hot air about Flynn had been printed around here, maybe we wouldn't have walked into a beating so wide open."

"But local pride, you know, my dear Eddie."

"Local bunk!"

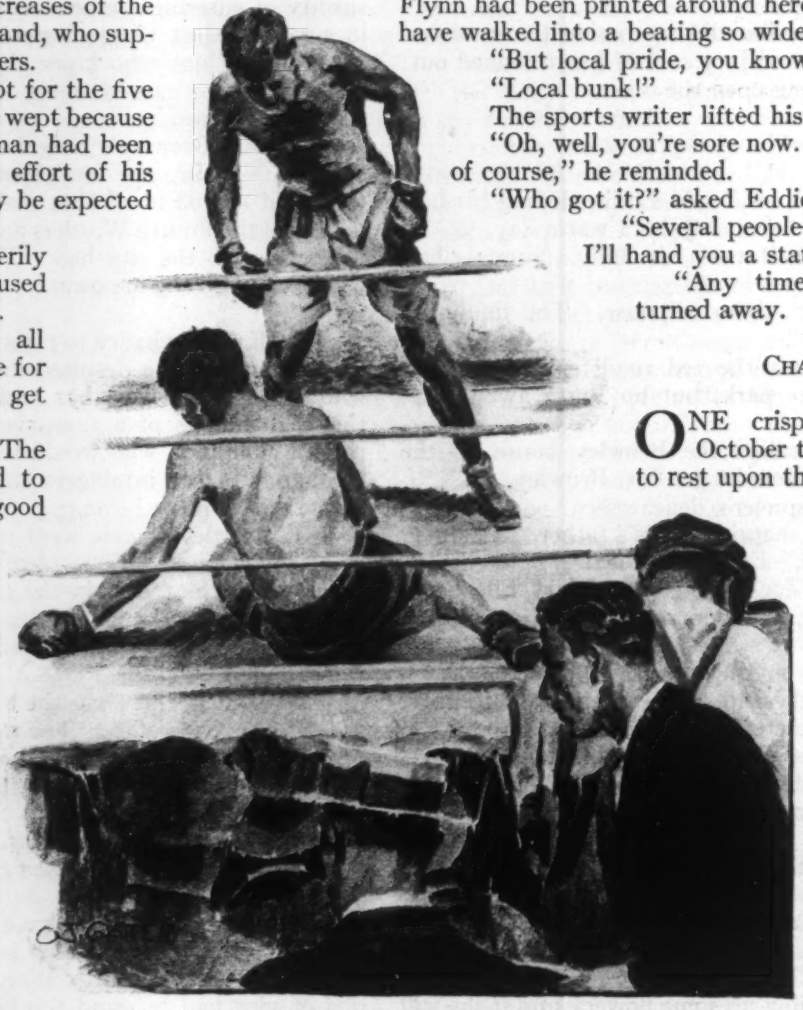
The sports writer lifted his thin shoulders.

"Oh, well, you're sore now. Your money's gone, of course," he reminded.

"Who got it?" asked Eddie indifferently.

"Several people—a sort of syndicate. I'll hand you a statement tomorrow."

"Any time," said Eddie, and turned away.



Four times in the fifth round the champion had the local contender on his knees

CHAPTER VII

ONE crisp afternoon in late October the red roadster came to rest upon the brow of a hill overlooking a colorful countryside. Crimson oaks, scarlet sumach and woodbine, golden maples and hickories filled the sunny world with a serene glory that was good for disappointed souls.

The young man at the driver's side breathed deeply of the pungent autumn air. For the first time since the fight the battered Flynn could say that he was himself again.

"These rides are better'n liniment," he told his friend. After a dreamy minute he added, "You're too good a fellow for your own good, Eddie."

The good fellow had not come out to listen to gratitude. He was brooding over the adamantine scorn of Berta's father. Ten cheerless days had dragged by since Berta and her young man had met. If ever he had needed her tender sympathy and her moral support, it was in this dark time following the fight.

But Pink wished to talk.

"Eddie, tell me something. How much did you lose on me?"

"Not a lot. Nobody in town would bet against you, Pink."

Admiration mingled with pity in the look the fighter gave him.

[*Continued on page 119*]

The Baby and the Spy

How Night Bombers Took a Hand in Secret Service Work by Day

By Major "Tom" Vigors

Author of "One Night Over the Lines"

Illustrations by Theodore Van Gorp

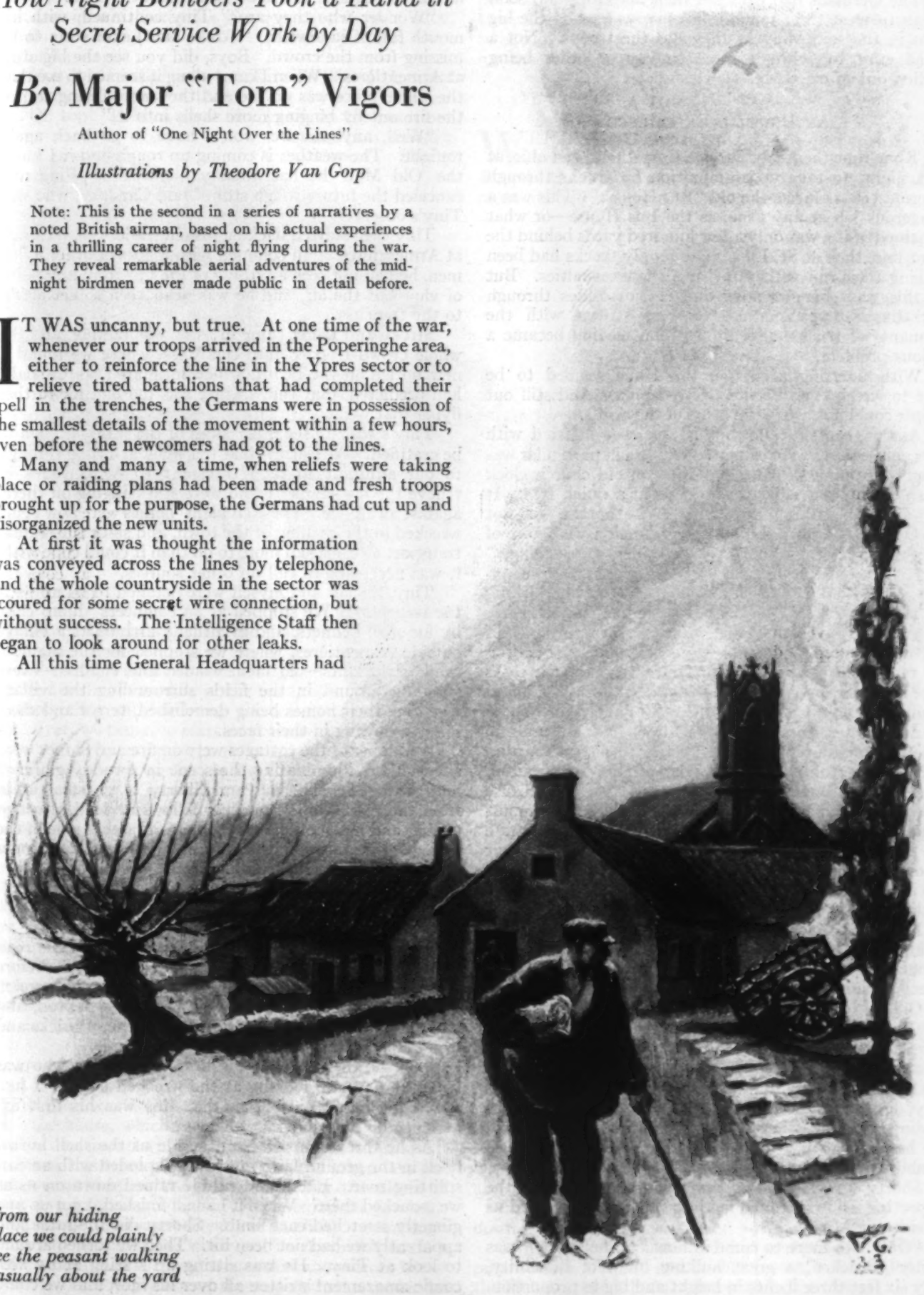
Note: This is the second in a series of narratives by a noted British airman, based on his actual experiences in a thrilling career of night flying during the war. They reveal remarkable aerial adventures of the midnight birdmen never made public in detail before.

IT WAS uncanny, but true. At one time of the war, whenever our troops arrived in the Poperinghe area, either to reinforce the line in the Ypres sector or to relieve tired battalions that had completed their spell in the trenches, the Germans were in possession of the smallest details of the movement within a few hours, even before the newcomers had got to the lines.

Many and many a time, when reliefs were taking place or raiding plans had been made and fresh troops brought up for the purpose, the Germans had cut up and disorganized the new units.

At first it was thought the information was conveyed across the lines by telephone, and the whole countryside in the sector was scoured for some secret wire connection, but without success. The Intelligence Staff then began to look around for other leaks.

All this time General Headquarters had



From our hiding place we could plainly see the peasant walking casually about the yard

been urging the Chief of the Intelligence to get the matter cleared up without delay, and some of the cleverest men from the Branch were drafted into the area to solve the mystery, which by now had become deadly serious.

The Germans had enlarged their activities and soon began to treat the ammunition convoys feeding the big guns in the same way as they did the troops. Not a night went by without some convoy or other being shelled out of existence.

An Unusual Experience

AT one time the Army Service Corps had been able, at night, to take up ammunition by trucks through Voormezeele as far as the old "Bus House." This was a dangerous job at any time, as the Bus House—or what remained of it—was only a few hundred yards behind the front line, then at St. Eloi. The supply trucks had been making their run with surprisingly few casualties. But all this was changed now, and the roadsides through Dickebusch and Voormezeele were strewn with the remnants of trucks, and ammunition feeding became a serious problem.

With unerring accuracy, the Huns seemed to be able to wreck every well-conceived plan. And still our people could not get to the heart of the riddle.

As was generally known, this area was infested with spys, and several were caught. One man in particular was caught signaling with the hands of an old church clock in an abandoned village, and suffered a quick fate. It was ascertained at his trial, however, that he was not the agent instrumental in conveying such a vast store of information as the Germans were evidently receiving.

Night after night some of our Aerial Squadron patrolled up and down the sector, light-spotting and looking for the slightest trace of any spy signaling, but nearly always returned with the same report: Nothing of importance noted. On the few occasions the Squadron did report suspicious lights or fancied signals, the cases were at once investigated, but without any material result.

About this period the Squadron had an unusual experience. Shorty and I had returned one night from endeavoring to put out of existence an ammunition dump lying around Douai. I say endeavoring, because the whole of our "eggs" went wide, as it had been impossible to take any sort of decent aim, owing to the strafe the Boche had put up. Returning, we had handed in our report to the adjutant and were now sitting down outside the Mess waiting for the remainder of the boys to come back.

Low fleecy clouds were blowing in from the west, making night flying unpleasant, to say the least of it, and it looked as if the weather would break too badly to allow a second show to take place that night.

One by one the boys were returning. To watch a night squadron landing after a show is really a wonderful sight. The searchlights, the ground flares, with little pigmy figures—ground men—flitting about between the lights, the twinkling of wing tip lights on 'planes as they dipped in the glide in and then the big airplanes landing along the flares and lumbering clumsily off toward the hangars, with a man running at each wing tip, all combine in making an unforgettable picture.

Shorty and I watched several come in and as the respective fellows handed in their reports they joined us outside the Mess.

"Only two more to come in now." The speaker was "Tiny" Bracken, a great hulking lump of humanity, fully six feet three inches in height and big in proportion. Though not yet twenty years of age, he was one of our most able pilots and a man by experience. He had come straight into the Flying Corps from college, absolutely defying his parents when they wanted him to continue his schooling. Legally they could have stopped him, but he was so enthusiastic that they had not the heart to do it.

"Wonder who they are?" Tiny continued, with his mouth full of sandwich. "Stroke and Laker seem to be missing from the crowd. Boys, did you see the big stuff at Armentières? When I came along it seemed to me that the whole place was on fire and they were trying to put the fire out by binging more shells into it."

"Well, anyhow, we won't have to go back again tonight. The weather is coming up rough and if I know the 'Old Man' he has already phoned the Wing and canceled the future rough stuff," said Carslake, who was Tiny's observer.

Tiny then started back on his old subject of the strafe at Armentières. In common with a host of other flying men, he had not seen anything of the war from any point of view but the air, and he was dead keen to get a trip to the trenches.

Stroke and Laker came in as he was talking, and the whole crowd trooped into the Mess, where we found a new notice on the board, which intimated, as Carslake had predicted, that the weather was too bad for further flying that night.

Tiny's wish to see other sides of the war was soon to be gratified. We learned that the Wing had rung through to our adjutant to send transport to Armentières to relieve the few civilians who were still hanging on there, against all advice. These civilians' homes were now being wrecked in the shelling of the town, and since the regular transport already had more to do than it could cope with, it was necessary to call on other sources.

Tiny, Shorty and myself were detailed to go up with the transport. We stopped at an engineers' dump close by for steel helmets, and eventually arrived at a village outside Armentières, where we stopped for the night.

The peasants—old men, women and children—were standing around in the fields surrounding the village watching their homes being demolished, terror and sheer misery showing in their faces.

A number of the cottages were on fire and flames were shooting up, illuminating the scene in a ruddy glare. I had arranged with Tiny and Shorty to go straight in from the road, while the other fellows divided into two parties and made off across the fields to either side of the village. Separating in this way we minimized the danger of casualties from shells falling in the crowd of us.

We Hear A Strange Noise

A HEAP of rubble and bricks at one side of the road was all that was left of what had a short time before been a home. High above the din I could hear the scream of a high velocity shell. Shorty had heard it, too, and had flung himself flat down beside the heap of bricks and it did not take me long to follow his example.

"Get down, you fool!" I shrieked at Tiny, who was still standing and looking at the wrecked house. I had not remembered until then that this was his first experience of the kind.

As he threw himself down beside us the shell buried itself in the ground fairly near and exploded with an earsplitting roar. Earth and rubble rained down on us as we crouched there. When it had all finished, I got up and gingerly stretched each limb. Shorty did the same and apparently we had not been hit. Then we turned around to look at Tiny. He was sitting up staring at us with comic amazement written all over his face, and we could

not help laughing at his consternation, try as we would.

"Great Scott! What was that?" said Tiny, as he staggered to his feet.

"That, my son," said Shorty, "was what you have been longing to experience for the last few months. In other words, a shell and a big 'un, too. Are you satisfied now, you idiot? Next time you hear that screech, duck, and don't worry where you duck either. Just get down or you'll go up."

"You bet I will," retorted Tiny. "Phew! It must have dropped on top of us."

"On top! It hit a good fifty yards up the road, but quite near enough for you." Shorty pointed up the road to where the shell had burst. Quite plainly in the light from the flames could be seen a huge, gaping hole in the middle of the road.

Proceeding cautiously up the village street, we began to search for wounded civilians. Frequently parts of the cottages would crash down to the roadway and it took a long time to go a short distance, as we had to take cover continually while shells tore their way through buildings and exploded. It appeared as if the shell fire was getting heavier, and, looking back on that night, I have often wondered how it was we were not hit. Coming to what had evidently been the village green, we stopped and took our bearings. Now and again figures of soldiers appeared dodging in and out of the cottages on rescue work. Suddenly, during a lull in the shelling, we heard a wailing noise that seemed to come from a half-wrecked house on the opposite side of the road. We ran across, Tiny leading the way.

We Locate the Pitiful Cry

THERE was no mistake about it. The porchway of the house, which seemed to have been a more substantial one than the others, had been blown down and it was from this heap the pitiful cry was coming. As one man we set desperately to work, pulling the pieces of stone away and removing the shattered bricks carefully. We gradually decreased the size of the heap. Sometimes we had to abandon the work and lie down flat while a perfect tornado of dirt and stones flew about from bursting shells, and during one of these spells half a cobble hit Shorty on the shoulder, happily without severe injury, but putting him out of action as far as lifting was concerned, for a time at least.

At last Tiny and I, with Shorty helping as best he could with one arm, came to the last big obstacle, the portico of the hallway, which had fallen down across the two stone pillars of the porchway. How this was going to be moved was a puzzle. Moved it had to be, though, for the sound came from underneath this big piece.

A Horrible Sight

WRENCHING and tugging, Tiny and I tried again and again, but we could not move it an inch. By this time Tiny was frenzied with fury and excitement, as well he might be, for in front of us sticking out from beneath one of the pillars could be seen a foot—a woman's, and pitifully crushed.

We told Molly the story and she took command of the whole situation and, incidentally, the baby

Shouting out to wait a minute, Shorty disappeared around the corner of the house, quickly reappearing with a long piece of stout timber, which he dragged along. Tiny grabbed it and between us we inserted it between the corner of the portico and one of the pillars, and gradually pried it over and off the pillars.

Out of breath and gasping, we hardly dared look down. When we did we saw an awful sight.

Lying with her head and feet crushed by the two pillars was a woman, and on her breast, still clasped in the lifeless arms, a little baby, swathed in a rug.

Tiny gave a gasp and walked away. Shorty and I, more hardened to such things through long months in the trenches, stayed and looked at each other, unable to speak.

At length, we managed to lift the baby from the poor woman's arms. As I stepped back with it in my arms, Tiny rushed toward me and snatched the child, shouting:

"Give it to me. I got there first and—and—well, you fellows know——" His voice broke.

Realizing that he was scarcely responsible for his actions, I said nothing. Only a short time before Tiny had received news that his baby brother had died, and Shorty and I understood how he felt at this moment.

Tiny Takes Possession of the Baby

CROUCHING down in front of Tiny, we watched him as he slowly unfolded the rug. As he did so a tiny arm came out and crept up to the flying wings on the left breast of his tunic, resting there in a possessive manner. Uncovering it altogether, we saw a baby which must have been very, very young. I was no judge, but it was quite the smallest I had ever seen.

Gently Tiny replaced the rug and picked it up. Apparently it was unhurt. The portico, falling across the pillars, had formed a small roof over the baby, catching the débris which fell on top. He stood up suddenly.

"Let's go, boys. I don't think I want any more."

In silence we made our way slowly and tortuously along the street. After many narrow squeaks, we eventually arrived at the place where the transport was parked. Some of the fellows were there helping in the civilians, who by this time had nearly all been sent back to safety. Finding room in a lorry just starting back, we climbed in. At Merville the car stopped and the civilians were taken into the military hospital. Tiny, however, would not give up the baby, only going so far as to let the doctor inspect it to see if it was injured and to rake up from somewhere or other a bottle with which to feed it.

The baby, Tiny, Shorty and I, together with the driver, were the only ones left in the tender after leaving Merville, and silently we watched the dawn break as we sped back to the airdrome. I don't think any one of us spoke a word throughout the whole journey until we turned up the road leading to the sheds, when Shorty asked Tiny what he was going to do with the baby. Somehow or other he had, without dispute, assumed proprietorship of the child.

"I don't know yet, Shorty, but I think I'll go straight down to see Molly at the hospital. She will put me right. Boys, you'll never hear me anxious again to go up near the line. I've had enough."

Molly Sheer, a nurse at a hospital near Hazebrouck, was a universal favorite with our squadron, and Tiny was often teased for the marked attention he paid her. A small, dark, exceedingly pretty Irish girl, Molly was, I suspect, not a little fond of Tiny.

Signifying our intention to go with him, Shorty and I rushed into the Squadron Office, where we found the adjutant, pale and tired, waiting for the return of the rest of the men. Quickly explaining, we tore out again and, jumping into the car, headed for Hazebrouck. When we finally arrived at the hospital, we asked to see Miss Sheer at once, and, sure enough, in a couple of minutes, she appeared in the doorway, clean and dainty in her V. A. D. uniform.

Her big blue eyes opened wide with astonishment as she approached us.

"Whatever have you boys been doing? Tiny, what on earth have you there?"

"A baby, Molly," answered Tiny, flushing.

"A baby!" she exclaimed. "What do you mean?"

Quickly we told her the story and how Tiny had refused to leave it at Merville, and the girl's eyes grew misty as she listened. But she soon took command of the whole situation and, incidentally, the baby.

"Listen, you boys," she said, but she was looking at Tiny. "I'm on duty now, but I'll look after the little mite until I'm off and then I'll see what can be done. Get yourselves cleaned up and return this afternoon."

In the afternoon, after a short sleep, we presented ourselves at the hospital. Molly met us at the door, carrying the baby.

"We shall have to use your car for this job," she said, smiling at Tiny.

Outside was the C. O.'s touring car, which we had begged the "Old Man" to let us have, and we all got in. Molly instructed the driver to drive toward Steenwoorde, and then she proceeded to explain her plan.

"You know, Tiny, you have no right at all to take care of the baby, without permission from the French or Belgian authorities, but while you fight this out in your own way, something must be done for the kiddie. Er—of course, it is best that we find a foster mother, and I believe I know the very woman who would be glad to take it in charge. Quite recently she lost a little one of her own, and we are on our way to see her now.

"This girl lives with her mother, and her husband was killed before the baby was born, so really this little one will be a godsend to her. The mother does a whole lot of laundry work for the hospital and employs two helpers—a man and his wife. The daughter looks after the house, and I don't think we could do better."

At Steenwoorde, Molly told the driver to turn along the road toward Abeele, and a few kilometers beyond Steenwoorde stopped the car in front of a fair-sized old farmhouse, on the ground around which could be seen the laundry she had spoken about.

Molly explained the situation to the two women, and it was obvious from the rapturous look of the younger woman that she was only too willing to do what was asked. Satisfactory terms were reached at length and, leaving the baby in the young woman's arms, Molly returned to the car. As she turned the corner by the porch a young-looking man, crippled in one leg and carrying a large bundle of laundry that had dried, nearly stumbled into her. Smilingly, Molly made way for the man to pass, and he went on into the house without a word.

As Molly got into the car, she flashed a radiant look at Tiny and laughed.

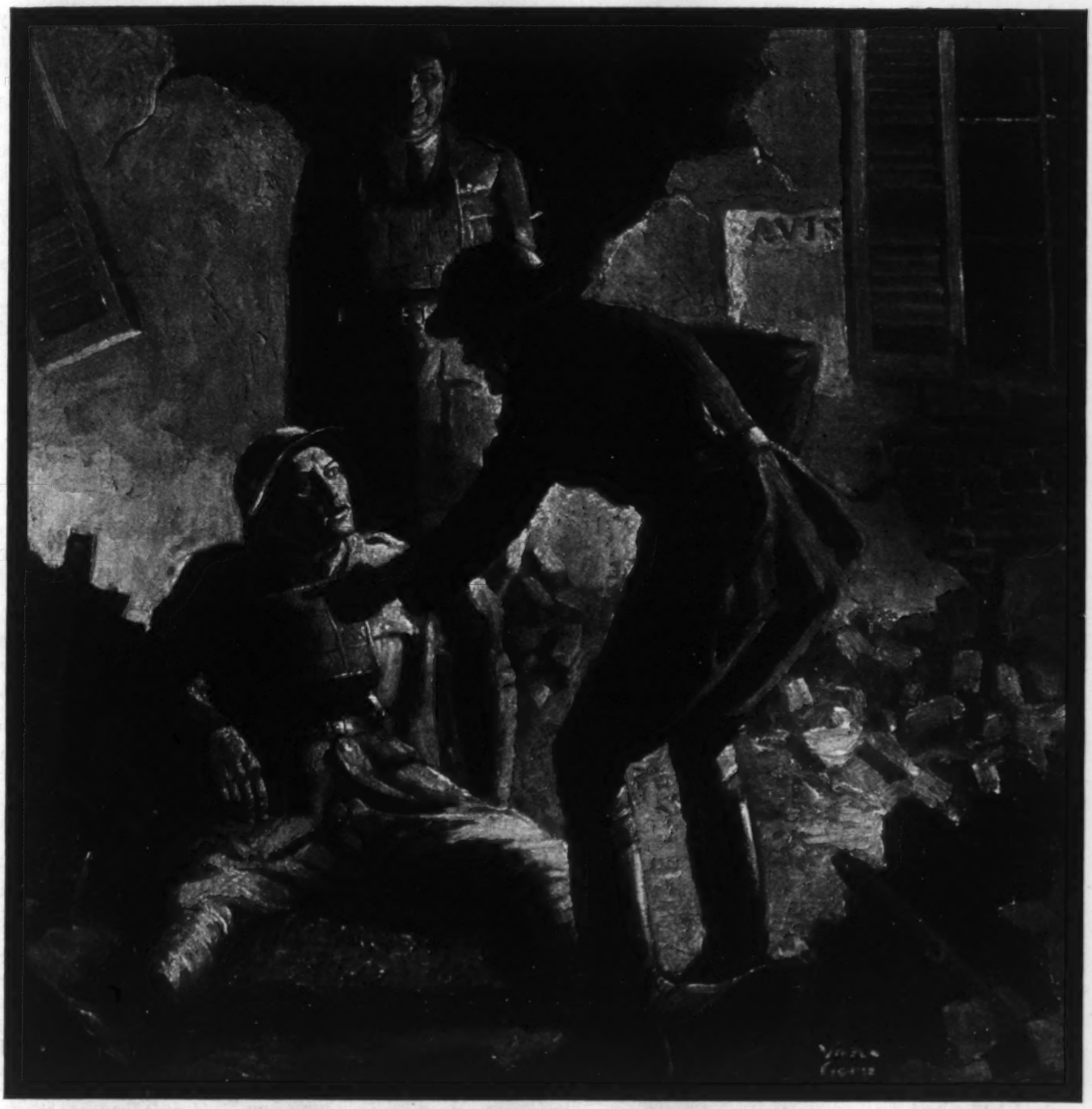
"Well, that's that. It's going to cost you ten francs a week and everything will be done as we wish."

"Thank you, Molly. Of course, I shall be over as much as I can, but I'd be glad if you would come along and keep an eye on her for me."

"Yes, I'll be over. I hate to tell you, but as a matter of fact at the hospital this morning we found the baby had slight symptoms of gas. Not enough to worry about much. It really is a wonder that it is still alive, after what you told me. Anyhow, I shall have to come over and treat it a little."

Leaving Molly at the hospital, we went back to the airdrome and began our preparations for the night's work.

For some days, although Tiny went over every available minute—he seemed to live for the baby—I did not hear much about it, except when he came in to report that the authorities were unable to trace any living relatives of the baby, and permission had been given for him to adopt her. He decided to call her after Molly Sheer. From then on the two—Molly Senior and Molly Junior, as we called them—claimed every spare minute of



After the explosion we turned around to look at Tiny. He was sitting up staring at us with comic amazement written all over his face and we could not help laughing

Tiny's time and Shorty and I saw very little of him.

Meanwhile, Headquarters were getting impatient and calling for action on the Salient question, and we were kept very busy coöperating with Intelligence and Secret Service men. Troops were becoming demoralized at the continued slaughter of their comrades without being able to fight back.

To help reassure the troops in the line, a high command inspected the area and even went through the front lines in places. During the whole tour the area and trenches were plastered with shells, happily without injury to the party, with the exception of a minor wound sustained by a young staff officer. This incident, however, really brought the issue to a head. Somehow and somewhere in this sector the Germans had such a perfect spy and communication system that it was possible to pass over information within the hour, if necessary, with good result. And this system had to be located, whatever the cost. Watches and investigations were trebled and for days the search went on.

One morning about this time Tiny called me into his room and told me he was going to fetch Molly Junior and give her a "flip."

"Fly with Molly!" I ejaculated. "Are you mad?"

"Mad, you chump, no, of course not. I've got permission from the doctor at the hospital and the 'Old Man' and I'm going to try it. The doctor says there might be a chance of curing her of the gas trouble if she is taken up in slightly rarefied atmosphere."

So before lunch time, Tiny disappeared and early in the afternoon turned up again with his precious baby.

Hauling out Carslake, his observer, and telling his orderly to follow on with his flying kit, Tiny strode over the 'drome to the hangars, where his 'bus was in readiness outside. When Carslake had adjusted a sling seat in his "office" and sat down, looking positively unhappy at the

prospect of holding a baby, Tiny handed Molly up to him. After putting on his kit he climbed up into his seat, settled himself, and tested the controls and engine. Satisfied, he waved his arms and then slowly taxied out to the middle of the field, turned up wind, opened up and was in the air, circling above us and climbing slowly.

A couple of minutes past the half hour, his engine was heard and in a few minutes, with the baby in his arms, Tiny himself walked up to the Mess—but what a different Tiny to the happy, laughing fellow of half an hour before!

His face was tense and set and deadly white. Only his eyes gave an inkling of the excitement within him. Without saying a word to the waiting men, he walked straight through to his hut, beckoning me to follow him. Wonderingly I followed. Placing Molly carefully on his camp bed, he turned to me, and his eyes were blazing.

"Old man, I want you to come back with me to the farm right away. I can't explain it now, but I think I've seen something that is important. Can you come?"

Seeing that he was really in earnest, I went at once to the colonel, who gave me the necessary leave. Telling the driver to drive like mad, Tiny got in the car and I followed him, and not one word did he speak all the way over. When we arrived at the farm, however, he seemed to change back to his usual self, and was chatting and laughing as we went up the path and entered the house.

Handing little Molly over to her foster mother, Tiny threw himself into a chair and pointed to another quite near him alongside the window.

Outside, Paul Jacques—the crippled man—was busy laying out bundles of laundry to dry on the grass.

"Well, Tiny, out with it. What is it all about?"

"Nothing yet. Just sit down and watch a little."

Idly I watched Jacques working outside, collecting and arranging the many pieces. He seemed to be very careful in his work, and many times altered the position of some piece or other, presumably to get as much washing into as small a space as possible. Every time he brought a fresh bundle out, he carefully sorted out the colored articles from the white before commencing to lay them out. Now and again he walked around laying hands on a piece to see if it was dry, and, if it was, he promptly took it up and carried it away.

Not seeing anything very interesting in this and getting bored, I said as much to Tiny, who immediately got up and replied: "Let's go, then."

We left the house and got into the car and Tiny told the driver to go toward Abeele. Lighting a cigarette, he leaned back in his seat. I followed his example and waited. Finally he commenced to speak.

"You may think I'm mad, and now that we are sitting here, I admit it does seem a bit absurd to me, but this morning I thought I had tumbled to the system the Huns are using to get their information, and this is the strange part. If what I think is true, it all leads back to the farm we have just left."

"What!" I exclaimed, in amazement.

"I knew you would be surprised, and that is why I got you away from the 'drome before telling you," Tiny explained. "Now just listen. A few afternoons ago I was over here with Miss Sheer, and while we were playing about with the baby, I distinctly heard the man Jacques speak to his wife. I had never heard him speak much before, but this time I was startled, for he spoke in German. After he had spoken he shot a frightened look at the house as if to see if he had been overheard. He couldn't see any one—we were behind the curtains—and evidently he was satisfied that he had not been heard. I thought about it for a day or two, and then a big idea struck me. I asked the doctor if he would give me permission to take little Molly up in the air. I had heard of cases where children had been taken up in England when they were suffering with weak lungs, with good results. He thought it was a good idea, and I then got permission from the 'Old Man.'

"I wanted to see the farm from above, so I told them what I was going to do. When I got over the farm—I was about eighteen hundred feet up—I could see everything clearly, and Jacques was down there as usual, putting out his work. But this is the strange part: Viewed from the air that laundry looks too orderly for any ordinary work. It has the appearance of distinct formations, which are changed every now and again as Jacques puts fresh pieces down or takes them away."

In a flash my mind went back to when I was watching Jacques a few minutes ago. Without a doubt Tiny had hit on the idea.

"I believe you're right, Tiny!" I cried excitedly. "We'd better tell the 'Old Man,' I suppose."

Then we drove back as quickly as we could.

The colonel listened in silence while Tiny told his story, and then remarked:

"Bracken, you seem to have hit accidentally on something that has puzzled the cleverest Intelligence men in France for a long time. However, we have got to have a few more facts than you have at present, so we will say nothing about it now. Sit down, both of you, and we will try to plan the next move."

The next day Tiny again went down to take little Molly for a second "flip." On the way back, Tiny dropped in at the hospital to see Miss Sheer for a while, and he left with her a big brown-paper parcel, which he had taken out of the rear of the car.

Arriving at the airdrome, he took Molly, swathed in coverlets, down to his 'bus. As Tiny approached, Carslake got into his cockpit and reached down for the child. Tiny clambered in, and straightway they taxied off in the direction of the farm.

Meanwhile Carslake had placed the baby on the floor, and uncovered "her." Inside the covers was a small long-distance focal plane camera, which he fitted into the sockets in the floor of the cockpit.

As they flew over the farm, fairly high up, Carslake clicked the camera trigger six times, carefully taking the photographs in area fashion. When he had finished, Tiny swung around and headed back. Before they landed, Carslake had carefully rewrapped the camera and when they alighted and taxied to the hangars he was carefully nursing the "baby" again.

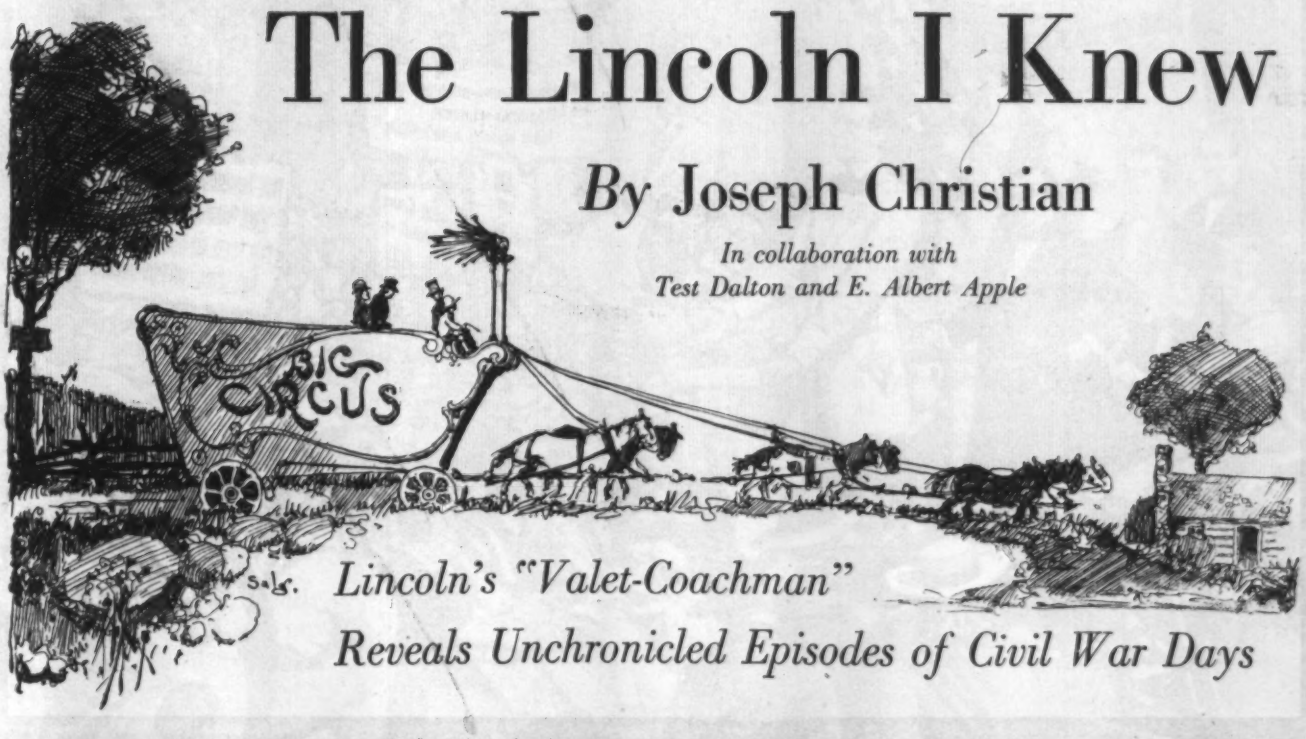
In the Squadron Office, Tiny was reporting excitedly to the colonel what they had done, while I was substituting the camera for a bundle of paper about the size of a baby. The colonel was not taking any chance of making Jacques and his wife suspicious.

Tiny, carrying the bundle once more, got into a waiting car and went straight back to the hospital to collect Molly Junior whom he had left with Molly Senior.

In the meantime the colonel rushed the camera to headquarters, where the plates were developed in record time. The prints proved without a shadow of doubt that Tiny was right and that Jacques was coding to the Huns by means of the laundry.

Of the ultimate fate of Jacques and his wife I need not tell, but his capture ended what was probably the cleverest system of transferring first-hand information ever devised. The mother and daughter owning the farm knew none of the details, not even that Jacques' "wife" was a man.

Mr. and Mrs. "Tiny" are now living quietly on a little fruit farm in Kent with little Molly, who does not know yet the part she played in the World War.



The Lincoln I Knew

By Joseph Christian

In collaboration with
Test Dalton and E. Albert Apple

Lincoln's "Valet-Coachman" Reveals Unchronicled Episodes of Civil War Days

I REALLY didn't know Lincoln. I don't think any one did. You see, he never told about the big things he was doing, I simply knew the little things. I only knew him as a human being—the most human man I ever met.

He was a great home man. He never wanted to go anywhere. He didn't care about theatres. He never chewed, smoked or drank that I knew of. Lincoln's dignity wasn't in putting on airs. Awkward and ungainly in appearance though he was, there was a certain dignity about him that made people respect him. He was very careless about his dress. He wore ties that hooked at the back, because they weren't much trouble to put on.

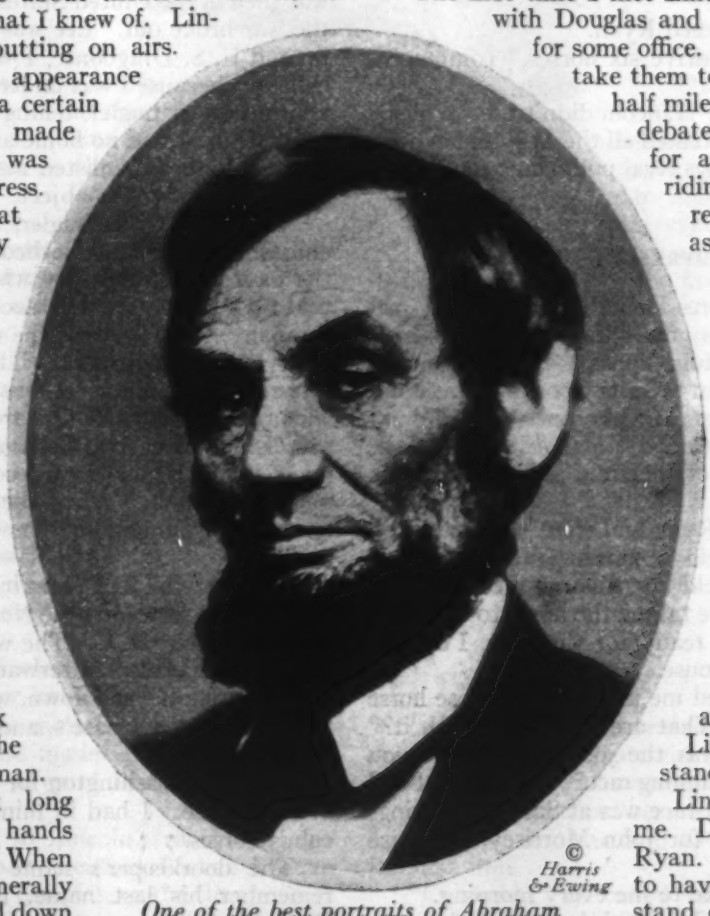
Everybody liked him. People took off their hats when he passed. When he made speeches the crowds cheered so much he could hardly speak. He always had a kind word for every one, and he never got angry. He would put his work aside any time to go out of his way to help others.

He spoke very clearly and deliberately, and with a slight drawl. He shook hands firmly. He had the strong grip of a strong man. He walked slowly, took long steps and always had his hands behind him when walking. When puzzled or worried he generally went out and walked up and down the back lawn of the White House for hours at a time, working out his problems.

In spite of his worries, however, he always had a good joke to tell, but it was always clean—the ones I heard, and I heard a great many, though it has been so long ago that I can't remember them. You would forget Lincoln's jokes, but you would never forget Lincoln himself.

The first time I met Lincoln was in Iowa. He was with Douglas and I think they were running for some office. They had to have a rig to take them to Clinton, Iowa, two and a half miles away, where they were to debate. I was working in Lyons for a liveryman named Ryan, riding running horses, and I was recorded at the Clipper offices as the youngest jockey in the country. The landlord of the hotel came down to our stables and ordered a rig.

A circus had been in town. It was in the old days when circuses were hauled from town to town on wagons. There had been a heavy rain. Ordinarily it took four horses to haul the band wagon, but the roads were in such bad condition that this time it was left behind. I hitched six horses to the band wagon and drove up to the hotel. Lincoln and Douglas were standing outside on the walk. Lincoln got up and sat next to me. Douglas sat back of us with Ryan. I was so small that I had to have a boot and shoe box to stand on while driving. Lincoln looked at me, then at Ryan, just



© Harris & Ewing

One of the best portraits of Abraham Lincoln at the time of this story

© *Brown Bros.*

FREE TERRITORIES AND FREE MEN,
FREE PULPITS AND FREE PREACHERS,
FREE PRESS AND A FREE POLL,
FREE SCHOOLS AND FREE TEACHERS
OLD ABE

One of the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates. "In those days," writes Joseph Christian, who drove Lincoln and Douglas in a circus wagon across Iowa, "political rivals spoke from the same platform"

before we started, and asked: "Who is going to drive this rig for us, Ryan?"

"This boy here," answered Ryan.

"He's pretty small to drive six horses," commented Lincoln.

We started for Clinton. Lincoln didn't talk to me on the trip. He and Douglas talked all the way. They were very friendly. In those days rival politicians spoke from the same platform.

First Impressions

WHAT were my impressions the first time I met Lincoln? I was too young then to think of anything except that I was driving a circus band wagon.

They spoke about two in the afternoon. It was a hot day, though it was in spring. Lincoln spoke first. I don't remember anything they talked about except that the crowd was cheering most of the time and that Lincoln was very droll.

I got permission from Ryan and went to Springfield, Illinois, to be the jockey in a running race. I rode a horse owned by a Springfield horseman named Mitchell. Nearly every morning while taking the horse to the track to work him out, getting ready for the race, I'd meet Lincoln coming out of his house.

One morning he stopped me and said, "Whose horse is that?" I told him. "What are you doing with it?" he asked. I told him I was the jockey. "Aren't you pretty small to be riding a running race?" I told him I had ridden before; that my first race was at Saratoga Springs when I was ten or eleven, for John Morrisey, the prize fighter.

After that Lincoln spoke to me every morning.

A short time after this I drifted down to Galveston, Texas, and rode herd for a cattleman for about four months. Then I went to Fort Carney. Robert E. Lee was then in the United States Army. This was just before the war broke out. Lee was a lieutenant colonel in the Second U. S. Dragoons. I went to Lee, but he couldn't enlist me because I was under the legal age. However, he kept me as his bugler, telling me I could quit whenever I wanted to. I had no home and Lee took a great interest in me. Later he enlisted me under the legal age, there being no relatives to object.

When I was his bugler, and before I was regularly enlisted, they fed and clothed me, but couldn't put me on the payroll. So one day while I was shaving him, Lee told me I could take his razor and shave the boys in the company, to pick up all the money I could in place of a salary. The razor was his father's father's and had come down in the family. It was made in Sheffield in 1694. This razor I kept. Afterward it was my most cherished possession, for with it I shaved Lincoln. I still have the razor, and it is good for a second shave over the face, but not for the first. When they finally enlisted me I was one of the youngest soldiers carrying a gun in the U. S. Army.

After serving five years in the army, part of the time doing active service on the Northern side, I was discharged in Washington, D. C. The war was not yet over.

A couple of days afterward the stables at the Executive Mansion burned down, with two of Lincoln's horses, two of Secretary Chase's, and a saddle horse of Secretary Wells.

I walked Washington for five days, then went to the White House. I had in mind a job taking care of Lincoln's horses.

The doorkeeper's name was "Old Pat." I can't remember his last name, but he had been there in Buchanan's time.

"Did ye want to see th' Prisident?" he asked.

"Yes," I answered, "and tell him I'm from Springfield." I said this so I'd be sure to get in. If a yellow dog had come from Springfield, Lincoln would have wanted to see it.

Pat went upstairs. Soon he came to the top of the stairs and called to me to come up.

I walked into Lincoln's office. I was old enough then to notice him closely. His looks struck me at once. While he was very homely he had the most pleasing countenance I had ever looked at.

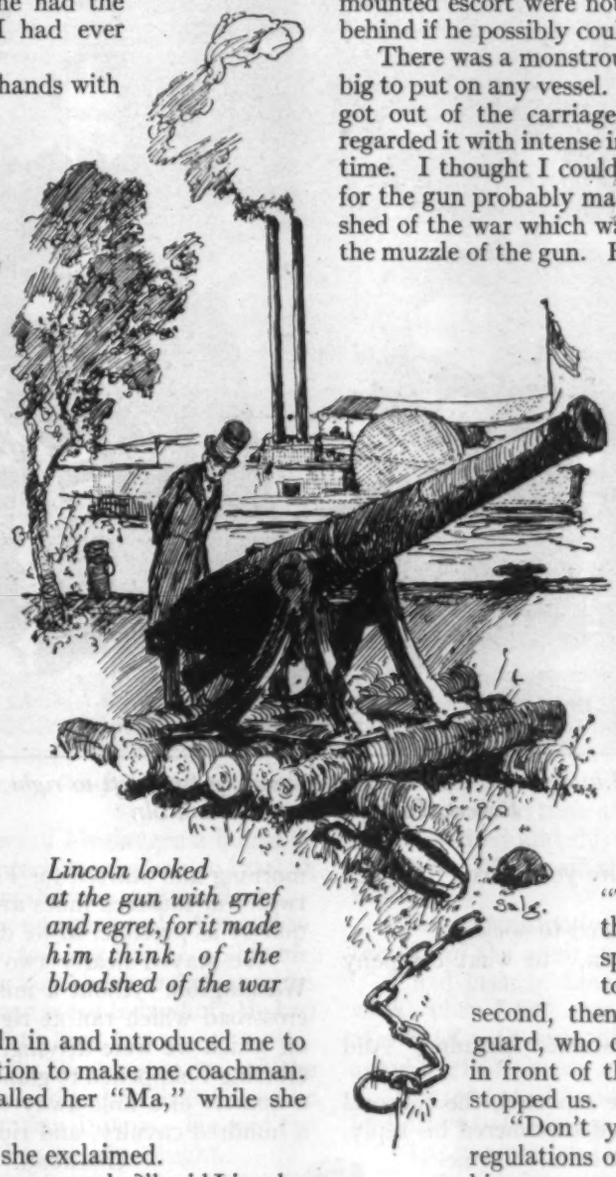
Lincoln got up and shook hands with me.

I wanted to be sure to get the job I was after, so I did something I have always regretted. I told him a horse drover had brought me from Springfield and left me in Washington without a dollar. I had in my pocket about six hundred dollars that I had saved up in the army.

Lincoln shoved his work aside and began to ask me questions about Springfield.

"What's your business?" he asked after a while.

"Riding running horses," I answered. Then I told him I would like to take care of his horses.



Lincoln looked at the gun with grief and regret, for it made him think of the bloodshed of the war

At the White House

HE followed me to the hall when I left.

"Come back tomorrow morning at nine o'clock," he instructed, "and I'll see what I can do for you." Then he pulled out a five dollar bill. I didn't want to take it, but he made me.

The next morning when I called he brought Mrs. Lincoln in and introduced me to her. He told her he had a notion to make me coachman. I noticed at once that he called her "Ma," while she addressed him as "Pa."

"Why, Pa, he's so small!" she exclaimed.

"What difference does size or age make?" said Lincoln. "He's a jockey, and he will take better care of the horses than the big, rough, drunken men we have had in the past."

I was hired as their personal coachman. I left three times during the seventeen months I drove for them, but the first two times I came back.

I slept in the basement, where there were four or five rooms, a kitchen and two bedrooms. My room was at the foot of the stairs.

Lincoln kept only two horses—a pair of fine-looking grays. When I wanted four horses he'd get two black ones I had selected from the mounts of the bodyguard. They matched the grays and made a beautiful four-in-hand. My horses were the envy of all the other coachmen and drivers in town.

Several times I walked to Lincoln's room with the intention of asking him if he remembered when I drove the band wagon for him and Douglas, or the time we met in Springfield, but I always lost courage as soon as I got to his door. Every time I started to knock my heart would beat so hard, I'd turn and rush down to the stables again. I'd been his coachman for a month when, after a little thought and reminding, he did recall me. I was mighty proud of the fact. My pride increases with every year that slips on with me—I'm seventy-eight now, as I figure it, though I may have lost track of a year or two.

One morning we drove to the Arsenal, then to the Navy Yard. Mr. Lincoln was alone in the carriage. The mounted escort were not with us. He always left them behind if he possibly could.

There was a monstrous cannon in the Navy Yard, too big to put on any vessel. We drove alongside it. Lincoln got out of the carriage, walked around the gun, and regarded it with intense interest. He looked at it for some time. I thought I could see grief and regret in his face, for the gun probably made him think of the great bloodshed of the war which was not yet over. He looked into the muzzle of the gun. He peered down into the bore for some time. Then he stepped up on the log scaffolding and stooped over to take a look at the fuse hole.

Presently he got back into the carriage without speaking. I waited for orders, but he gave none, so I turned and started to drive back home.

We came up past the old Capitol. It was filled with rebel prisoners. A guard was pacing up and down in front of it. The rules and regulations of this improvised prison were that no carriages or people should pass unless they went fast. I didn't know about the rule, so I let the horses walk.

The guard saw us and yelled, "Trot along there; trot along there!" I didn't like the way he spoke to us so I paid no attention to him. He glared at me for a second, then yelled for the corporal of the guard, who came out from the doorway, ran in front of the horses, held up his gun, and stopped us.

"Don't you people know the rules and regulations of this prison?" he asked. I told him no.

"Well," he snapped—for he was a young corporal and very important, "the rules are to drive by fast. I place you people under arrest."

"Young man," I asked, "do you know whom you have arrested?"

"No, and I don't care," he snapped.

"You have arrested the President of the United States."

A Perilous Adventure

IN an instant the corporal reversed his gun, straightened up and stood at present arms. He looked straight ahead, very pale and scared.

The President had been leaning out of the side of the carriage, watching us and listening. He spoke now for the first time.

"Corporal," he called kindly, "come here." The corporal obeyed. "I'm very sorry we broke the rules," said Lincoln, apologetically, "but neither my coachman

© Bachrach from Galloway

The Lincoln family in the White House. In the group, reading from left to right, are Mrs. Lincoln, Willie, Robert, Tad and President Lincoln

nor I knew about them. I assure you it won't happen again."

The corporal was still too scared to speak.

"Corporal," continued Lincoln, "to what company do you belong?"

The corporal told him.

"Who is your captain?" questioned Lincoln. "And what is your own name?"

Thinking he was about to be reported, the corporal could hardly talk at all. He half stammered his reply.

"Corporal," continued Lincoln, "come closer." The corporal did so. "I wish we had more men at the head of the army like you. I wish all our soldiers were as good and accurate and obedient to orders as you are. Good day, corporal."

We drove on, and I looked back. The corporal was still standing as if paralyzed.

When we reached the White House, Mr. Lincoln got out of the carriage and turned to me.

"That was a good ride, Joe," he drawled. His eyes twinkled. "But we got arrested, didn't we?"

Then, with his ungainly walk, and his coat tails flapping behind him, he stalked awkwardly into the White House.

One day during the war after the Fairfax Courthouse had been almost destroyed by shells, Lincoln and Secretary Stanton had a secret engagement over in Virginia. I hooked up four horses instead of two. We left early in the morning and started for Fairfax Courthouse, which was twelve or fourteen miles away. Lincoln wanted to go as quietly as possible, so we did not take a mounted escort.

We stayed nearly two hours, then started back to Washington. About a mile and a half out there was a crossroad which ran at right angles into the main road on which we were driving. Just before we reached this crossing I happened to glance over to the right, and about a quarter of a mile away were a lot of soldiers—fifty or a hundred cavalry, and riding toward us fast, down the crossroad.

I thought their coats looked gray and spoke to John, the footman.

"Look over there, John, and see if you can tell me who they are."

John looked. His eyes were better than mine, and one look was enough.

"They're rebels!" he gasped. "And they're after the President."

My heart leaped into my mouth, for two miles of bad roads lay between us and Falls Church where there were about forty thousand Union soldiers encamped. I gathered the lines and reached back for my whip—a four-horse whip with a long lash, trimmed with gold and silver bands. It was a dandy!

The horses were on a dog trot. I had an off leader cavalry horse that was a bit sluggish, but all you had to do was to touch him once with the whip. I touched him with the lash, and he jumped up in

the collar with his mate. Four times I touched him. Each time he went faster. I knew it was up to me to do the greatest driving of my life. I touched the near leader with the lash. He went up in his collar at once. The wheel horses started right up with them. They began to go strong.

Never, when I was a jockey, did I handle a horse as carefully as I did those four on that long ride for the life of President Lincoln. The country was woody then and a grove soon hid the rebels from sight. But far behind I could hear the rumble of those galloping cavalry horses.

The heavy government wagons had made the road mighty rough, and we bumped up and down considerably, but Lincoln and Stanton sat back calmly in their seats and never asked a question. Lincoln always had absolute faith in any one who was serving him. We galloped for a mile before we reached Falls Church. The soldiers ran out and stood in the road behind us, watching our carriage rumble along. They all knew the President's carriage, and cheered us as we went by. I never let the horses slow down until we drove up in front of headquarters.

The officers were alarmed as soon as they saw the speed at which we were coming, and ran out to meet us.

"What's wrong, Mr. President?" cried one.

Mrs. Lincoln Walks Home

LINCOLN was not excited a bit. Nothing ever seemed to startle him out of his calm.

"I don't know," he answered. "You'll have to consult my coachman."

When they heard the news of his danger a bugler at once sounded a rally and orders were given to start in pursuit of the rebels, but they did not capture them.

Later, a squad of cavalry escorted us to Alexandria, then we went up the Potomac to Long Bridge, and home.

About this time an Illinois boy about seventeen years old was court-martialed and sentenced to be shot. He had been caught in the Confederate lines.

His old father came on to Washington to see the President. He was very poor and in bad health, and he had walked most of the way from Illinois. He said the boy was on his way home when he was caught.

The old man pleaded with Lincoln. Tears streamed down the President's face as he listened. He told the man to come around the next morning. And next morning he had a pardon for the boy, which he handed to the anxious father.

I was upstairs those mornings for my orders from Mrs. Lincoln, so I heard the talk.

The old man and the boy came to the White House later and on their knees with tears in their eyes they thanked the President. He was greatly affected.

One day I was driving the President and Mrs. Lincoln.

One of the horses got the blind staggers, and began to toss its head and run wild. It took me several minutes to get it reined up against its mate and bring it to a standstill.

Mrs. Lincoln grew frightened and jumped right out of the carriage. Lincoln sat back calmly, without moving.

"The horse will probably be all right in a moment, madam," I assured her. "It just has blind staggers. It's a queer disease. Sometimes it lasts just a few minutes, and never happens again. But it may have another attack in a few minutes or a few hours, or a few days."

But my explanation failed to reassure her, and Lincoln came to the rescue.

"Now, Ma," he urged gently, "you know I don't want you to walk. You'll be too tired. Get back in and we'll drive slowly."

"No, I'm going to walk," she insisted, still frightened at the horse's antics.

"All right," said Lincoln.

So I turned the horses and started back, at a clipping gait.

Looking back, I saw Mrs. Lincoln waving her arms for us to stop, but I pretended I didn't see her.

It was some time after our return that Mrs. Lincoln came in, tired and dusty.

"Hello, Ma," said the President, "did you have a nice walk?"

She was wrathy, but Lincoln just smiled and that was the end of the affair.

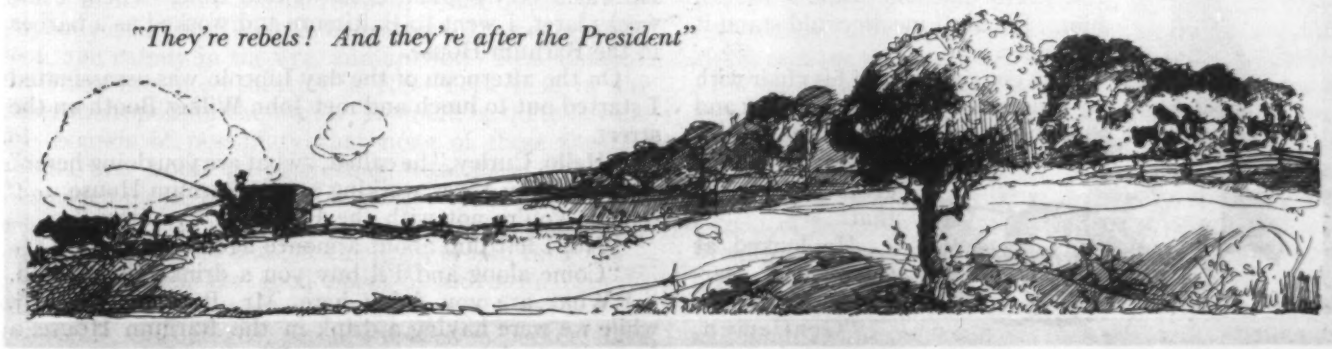
I had been in Lincoln's service about three or four weeks when I first shaved him. He had an engagement at a hotel with some high official, at one o'clock, and he asked me to be ready at that time.

Toward noon I had the carriage cleaned up and ready. So I drove to the house and went up to Lincoln's room.

"Are you ready, Joe?" he asked, in his quiet, gentle voice. I said yes. "I don't know what to do," he said, in a worried tone. "I need a shave badly and my barber hasn't come yet."

A great idea came to me.

"Why not let me shave you, Mr. President?" I asked.



"They're rebels! And they're after the President"

"Are you a barber, Joe?" He seemed somewhat astonished.

"No," I answered, "but I shaved some in the army. I used to shave Robert E. Lee. I've got his razor down in my trunk."

"Get the razor," decided Lincoln. "We'll try it."

I got the razor and returned to the President's room. The barber had a regular barber's chair of the old-fashioned kind right in the room. Lincoln took off his hat and collar. I shaved his upper lip and cheeks and under lip, but I left the beard on his neck from the chin line down, for he never shaved there.

Lincoln's Consideration of Others

"JOE," he said, when I got through, "you'll always be on hand when I need you, so you can expect to shave me two or three times a week from now on."

His beard was coarse, though there were but few hairs. It was the hardest beard I ever shaved—and I shaved for fifty-seven years. He shaved twice a week, sometimes three times, and generally he'd joke quite a bit while being shaved.

Since he was always considerate of others and willing to go out of his way to help any one, if I was in a hurry he'd say, "Never mind, Joe, I'll wash the lather off myself."

He gave me about five dollars' tip every month. You see he'd been paying the barber a dollar every time he was shaved.

In those days we had no regular harness grease. I had to use lamp black and then soap it down. I told Lincoln he might send for me when my hands and clothes were in bad condition and not be clean enough.

"That's all right, Joe, you come along just as you are," he said. There were no frills about Lincoln, he was very plain—one of the common people.

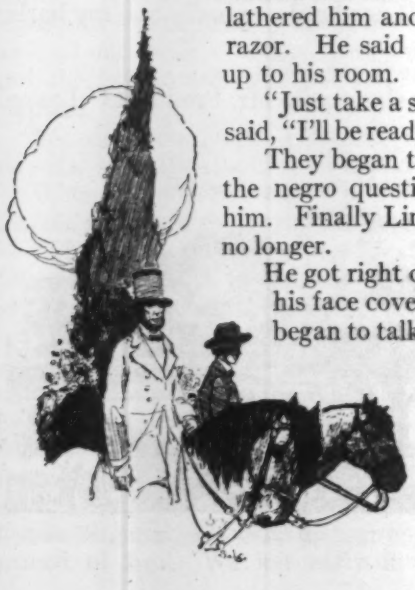
On the occasion of the levees, or weekly receptions to the public, I would help John, the footman, open the hack doors in front of the White House. Afterward I'd have to go through the reception halls to get back to the stables, or else go around the house; so I'd follow the crowd in and Lincoln would shake hands with me and jerk my arm a little and laugh in an undertone, and say, "Go on through, Joe, go on through."

Afterward he'd say, "Joe, don't you see me enough without coming to my receptions?"

"Yes," I'd answer, "but I never get tired."

Then he'd be pleased and laugh.

Two members of the House, two from the Senate, and two of the Cabinet came one morning during the war, while I was shaving Lincoln. I had lathered him and was stropping the razor. He said to send them right up to his room.



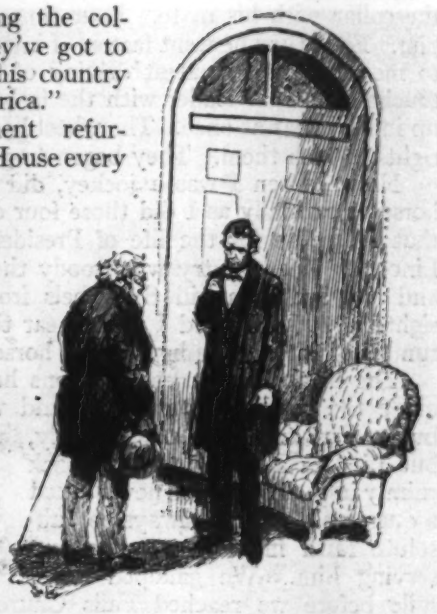
"Just take a seat, gentlemen," he said, "I'll be ready in a few minutes."

They began to talk to him about the negro question while I shaved him. Finally Lincoln could stand it no longer.

He got right out of his chair with his face covered with lather and began to talk and no one smiled. I guess it takes a great man to do that.

He looked at them very earnestly, then said:

"Gentlemen, there are just two problems regarding the colored people. They've got to be colonized in this country or sent back to Africa."



The government refurnished the White House every time a new President went in. I slept in Buchanan's bed, a beautiful cherry bedstead with a canopy. I was clearing up my room one morning — I always made up my own bed—when Lincoln came down the steps. He stopped in the doorway.

"Joe," he said, as he looked around the room, "if you just get rid of this old furniture I'll get you a new set." I told him it was good enough for me. "Well," he drawled, "any time you want a new set just clear this stuff out and let me know."

I could have had Buchanan's bed, table and two chairs. They're valuable relics now. And Lincoln's old hat and hat-box, which I hear some fellow paid big money for, I kept hanging in the feed room of the stable, all covered with cobwebs and dust.

About a month before Lincoln was assassinated I had again decided to leave his service. I found Lincoln alone in his room looking over some papers. He looked more worried than usual. I told him I was going to leave.

"Joe, you can't quit me," he said. "Just think of me and you won't quit."

I told him nothing would stop me this time. He shook hands and said if he could ever do anything for me he was at my service. Lincoln made no distinction in regard to money or position in life; he paid just as much attention to the humblest and poorest man as to the rich man or the statesman. He wished me success and said good-by.

I looked back as I closed the door slowly. He was watching me and smiling.

That was the last time I ever saw Abraham Lincoln alive. He had a kind smile on his face, and I sure hated to leave him.

I went softly down the stairs.

It *was* good-by.

I Meet John Wilkes Booth

AFTER that I worked for a few weeks in a barber shop in Washington and shaved some of the biggest men of that period. I shaved John Wilkes Booth often. He was a very popular actor at that time. Then, a few weeks later, I went to Baltimore and worked as a barber in the Barnum House.

On the afternoon of the day Lincoln was assassinated I started out to lunch and met John Wilkes Booth on the street.

"Hello, Curley," he called, "what are you doing here?"

I told him I was working at the Barnum House.

"So you're not with the President any more."

"No, I left him about a month ago."

"Come along and I'll buy you a drink," he invited.

"What are you doing here, Mr. Booth?" I asked, while we were having a drink in the Barnum House, a few minutes later.

[*Continued on page 117.*]

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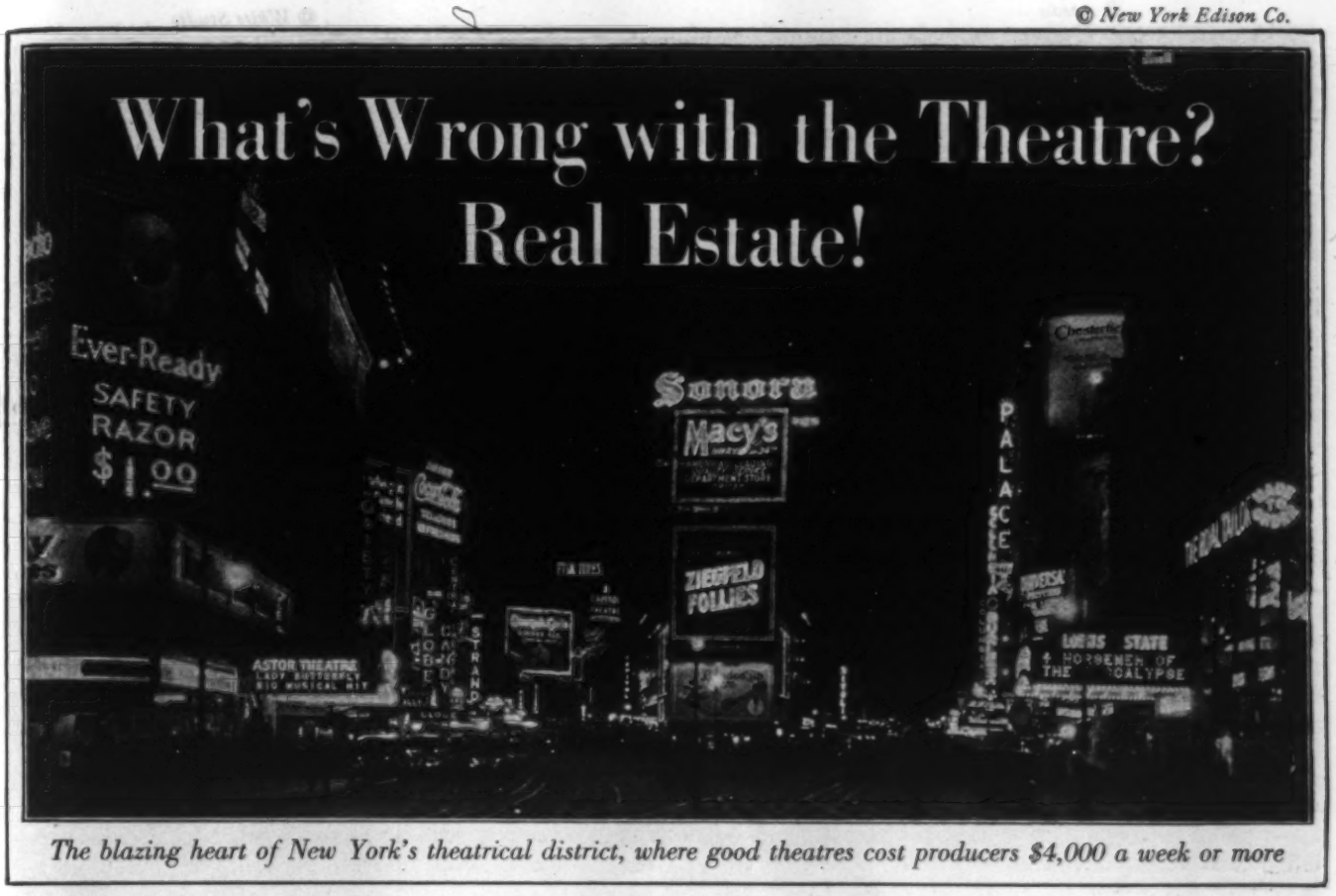

The blazing heart of New York's theatrical district, where good theatres cost producers $4,000 a week or more

Extraordinary Business Problems That Are Stifling the Stage

By Walter Prichard Eaton

IF you engaged in a commercial undertaking where half your gross earnings were absorbed in rent, you would regard it as a pretty shaky business, wouldn't you?

If you kept a store in which from half to two-thirds of the new goods you stocked each season were tolerably sure not to sell, you would regard it as a pretty shaky business, wouldn't you?

If you had to move your store into a different building every time you stocked up, and had to appeal to a new and wholly problematic set of buyers, you would regard it as a pretty shaky business, wouldn't you?

The production of plays in New York, for most of the people engaged in it, is just that sort of business. It is probably the most inefficiently conducted, the most wasteful and extravagant and uncertain business in the world—for most of the people engaged in it. For a few, it appears to be a gold mine. Only most of the few aren't really in it. They are in the real estate business. If anybody asks you "What's the matter with our theatre?" look him calmly in the eye, and answer, "Real Estate."

There are more theatres in New York than in any other metropolis of the world. It would be quite beyond the bounds of possibility that none of these theatres should ever house an interesting, vital play. They *do* have such plays, but if you aren't pretty wise to what is what on Broadway, you will have to waste your money on half a dozen bad ones, at the least, to find the good.

Furthermore, the good plays by no means always succeed as business ventures for their producers, and the producers, discouraged, perhaps broken in pocket, have to give up. It is a silly, wasteful process, and it is deadly discouraging to experiment, to the free, unhampered play of the creative spirit which, in the theatre as anywhere else, alone produces vital work.

But what has real estate to do with it?

Simply this—all the so-called first-class theatres in New York are centered in the Broadway district; land values in that district are exceedingly, if not excessively high. The newer playhouses, moreover, were erected under excessive building costs; many theatres are built on a ground lease removed by one, two, or even three or four holders from the actual owner of the land—each holder, of course, taking his share without making any social return, and adding to the rental price. Now the public ordinarily refuses to go to a theatre not in this district, and a producer dares not, as a rule, send his play elsewhere in America until it has been indorsed by Broadway.

This being the case, the man who owns or controls a Broadway theatre can, if he chooses, sit back and grow rich, without doing a stroke of work himself. He can ask all the rent the traffic will bear—and get it. He can invest a few millions in Broadway theatres, or in the permanent leases of such theatres, and thereafter, although he continues to call himself a theatrical manager, he becomes nothing in the world but a real estate speculator, speculating on a sure thing. That is exactly what certain managers have done. The number of theatres along Broadway is many, but the number of controllers of them is few.

What is the result? The result is that they ask a minimum rental per week for their theatres, and if you can't pay it, out you go. *If the gross receipts are more than*

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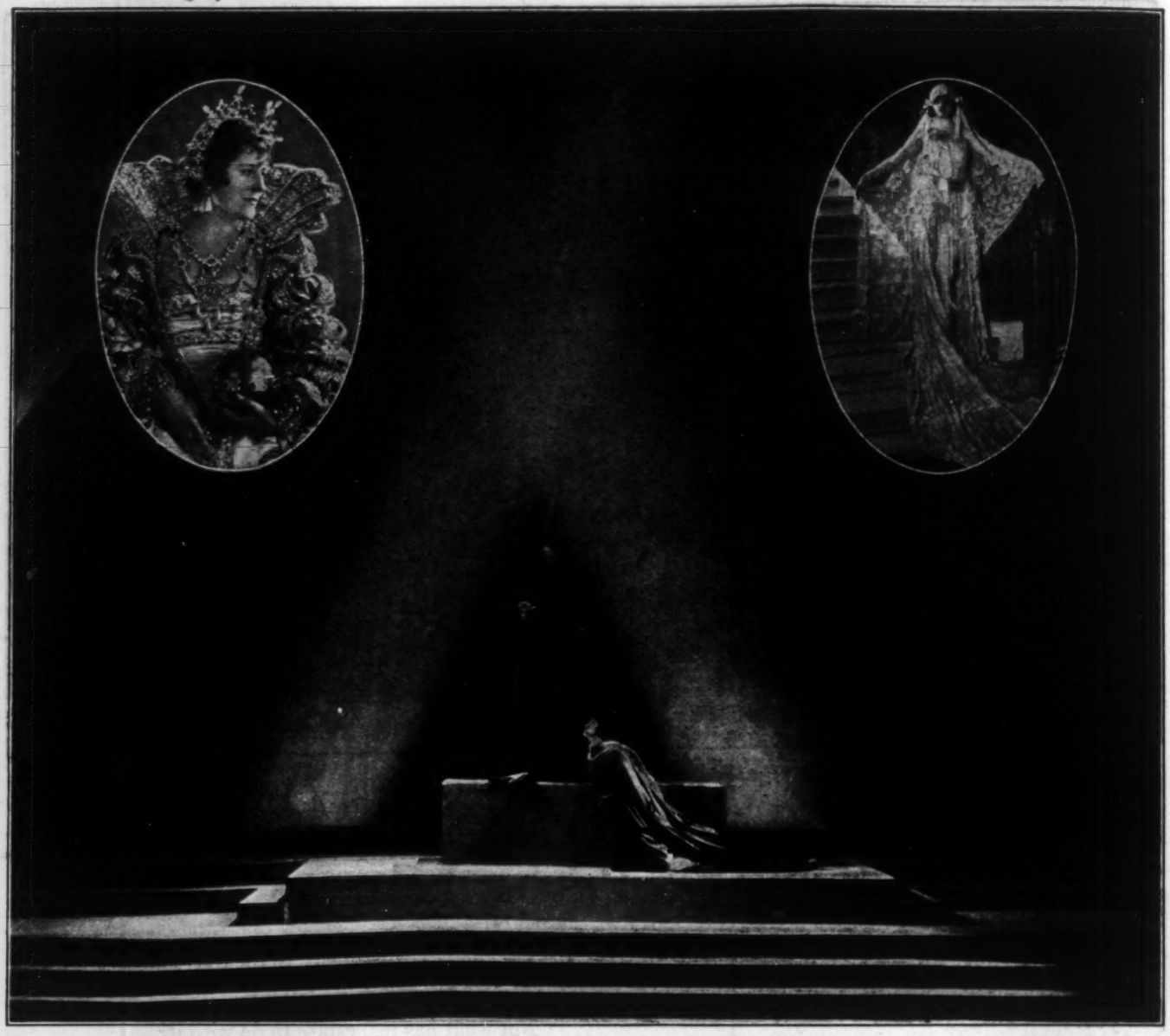

Theatre Guild's inexpensive but impressive setting by Lee Simonson for "Tidings Brought to Mary," contrasting with bits of Broadway's spectacular extravagance. Insert at left, Delysia in her $8,000 gown for "The Courtesan;" at right, Jessie Reed, highest paid showgirl, who just "walks on" in a $3,000 radium gown—and earns $250 a week!

a certain percentage above this minimum, they take a share of those receipts, also. Of course, the minimum rental varies, but at present, in a good year, $4,000 per week is not an unusual minimum rental for a good Broadway theatre.

Consider a moment what that means.

The producer pays $4,000 for the use of the theatre, no matter how small his receipts. He pays his actors, say, $2,000; it can hardly be less if he has a good cast, with two or three well-known players in it; that makes $6,000 a week. His production—i. e., the scenery, properties and costumes—costs him $10,000, let us say as an average. Some plays with a single set cost less, but many cost much more. If he puts aside $1,000 a week on this account he has to play at least ten weeks to get his money back, but we will assume that he expects to stick it out that long That makes $7,000.

Play Producing is Purely Speculative

BUT before the play could be shown on Broadway, it had to be "tried out" on the road for two weeks or so. The actors had to be paid for that, as well as part-time for rehearsals, and the out-of-town theatres had to be reimbursed and the railroad charges met. Call it another $10,000, or $1,000 a week to come out of the New York box-office receipts. That makes $8,000.

But there are author's royalties to pay, several hundred a week for advertising, the salary of a press agent, business manager, etc., and the overhead of a New York office. Besides, the producer has to put in a salary charge for himself to live on. Another thousand a week is probably too little. It would be nearer $2,000. In other words, the play has to take in $10,000 a week at the box office for the producer to break even.

And, mind you, the play is a purely speculative venture; he has no idea whether it is going to "take" or not.

Suppose the theatre seats a thousand people. There are eight performances a week. Two hundred seats in the second balcony can yield less than $200 a performance. Three hundred in the first balcony can yield, say, $600. Five hundred downstairs, at $2.50 a seat, can yield $1,250—a total of close to $2,000, or a possible $16,000 for the week. If the play fills the theatre, then—if it is a "hit"—the producer stands to make a good deal of money, though the additional rental percentage will take half, probably, of his $6,000 profit. However, the

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number of plays that fill a theatre at every performance for ten weeks is relatively very small. In a typical season probably not one play in five fills the theatre at every performance. Do you begin to sense what a dangerously speculative business the production of plays is, as at present conducted on Broadway?

Now, let us consider a moment the kind of plays which, for the most part, "get over big"—in Broadway jargon—which do fill the theatres eight times a week. As a rule they have no claim to distinction of any sort. They are to the drama what the "best seller" is to the novel. They blaze no new path in art, they have nothing significant to say about life and living. They are more or less conventional, ephemeral entertainment.

All right—what of it? Why shouldn't people have their light entertainment? They should. But here is the point. When a young producer without much capital, or even a more experienced and wealthy producer, sees that it is this sort of play which makes the amount over eight or ten thousand a week necessary to insure a profit, and realizes that if he puts on some drama which cannot play for at least two months and a half on Broadway to pretty consistently large audiences, he cannot get back the initial outlay, let alone make any money, what, in all conscience, do you think he will do? Do you think he will go right ahead and put on the untried work, the daringly experimental play, which experience and common sense tell him hasn't a chance of attracting any such number of people, or do you think he will do his best to find a second "Lightnin'," a popular light entertainment, cut in the pattern which in the past has proved popular?

Well, he does and he doesn't. One of the finest things about the theatre is the unquenchable hope it inspires in its workers, the loyalty to the best in dramatic art in the face of discouragement. It is always possible for some really new and vital play to come along and capture the public *en masse*, because the public has a way of responding immediately to the real thing at times.

But more often the response is just what you would expect—from only the more discriminating minority. The play takes in five or six thousand a week for a few weeks, a few thousand people see it and praise it—and then the producer can stand the gaff no more. He has to close it up. If he started on a shoe string, he finds himself broke. If he started with some accumulated capital, his stock is depleted and he casts about for a second "Kiki" or "Lightnin' "—i. e., for the amiably entertaining mediocrity to replenish his purse.

The Experimental Theatres

WE said the answer was rent. If theatre rentals on Broadway were $1,000 a week, and if the theatres were built with modern stage equipment to cheapen the cost of production, I could name you half a dozen fine dramas which could have made a little money for their producers. Somebody will no doubt remind me at this point that if the rental of a theatre which cost $500,000 to erect, and which is built on a piece of land that itself exacts a high rent, were only $1,000 a week, for, say, thirty weeks a year, the owners couldn't pay their rent on the site and the interest on their building investment. Perhaps not. But that has nothing to do with my statement that the answer is "Real Estate."

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A striking contrast of thrift and expense in two successful Broadway productions. At left, $25,000 chandelier with human decorations from the "Passing Show of 1923." Below, a comparatively inexpensive but thrilling scene from the Theatre Guild's production of "R.U.R.," which moved to the Broadway district and successfully held its own there.

Photo by Bruguiere

You ask me why there isn't more free, creative, vital artistic experiment on Broadway, and I answer: "Because rents are so high that producers cannot afford to experiment, and because the demand is such that theatre builders don't have to erect modern, scientifically equipped stages. They can rent their theatres without. We, the public, have of course created this high valuation; it is our demand, centered on Broadway, which has made the real estate speculator the real czar of the American theatre. And, as usual, we the public pay the piper, and the speculator reaps the profits."

What interests me is the fact that even under present conditions certain clever artists have found a way to beat the game.

I have in mind certain experimental theatres, like that of the Provincetown Players, who have given to the American stage our finest living dramatist, Eugene O'Neill; and I have in mind more particularly, because of its financial success, the Theatre Guild. The Theatre Guild is a coöperative association. It is about the only example of coöperation in our theatre. There are half a dozen directors in this association, all comparatively young people. They started four years ago with almost no capital except enthusiasm, talent, and a belief in their idea. The idea was to produce nothing but good, vital plays, without any consideration of "what the public likes;" to produce them well, but cheaply; to induce the actors to coöperate also, and to induce enough of the public to become subscribers to assure a small audience that would keep the wolf from the door. They hired an old, run-down theatre, the Garrick, considered too far removed from Broadway to be desirable, so that they pay less than half the rental demanded uptown—though they pay quite enough for what they get to satisfy anybody but a New York real estate speculator.

Briefly, their scheme was as follows: the directors, some of whom were scenic artists, some producers, some merely interested amateurs, should receive very small weekly salaries—indeed at times they have taken none at all—and only after a certain percentage of any profits had been divided among the actors and a certain percentage set aside in the sinking fund, should the directors share; the actors, who it was hoped would form a more or less permanent company, would work for small fixed salaries, but would share *pro rata* in any profits, so that if a production should make a hit with the public, their rewards would be equal to a Broadway salary, or even better; finally, the public should be asked to subscribe in advance to all productions for the season, and as a reward a special private performance of some unusual play would be given each spring free for subscribers only.

In April, 1919, the Guild made its first production, of Benevento's Spanish play "Bonds of Interest," with second-hand scenery built and painted over by Rollo Peters and Lee Simonson, the Guild's young scenic directors, with their own hands—of necessity, too, because there was no money to hire it done. There were but three hundred subscribers, and the Guild barely kept its

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Night view of the Broadway region where some eighty theatres are crowded together, in one or another of which nearly every successful play must find a home at staggering rentals. Right, the old Garrick Theatre where the Theatre Guild has wooed success in the byways; left, scene from the Guild's inexpensively staged and popular "Liliom," which was able to compete with Broadway productions

Photo by White Studio

Radium lace ballet from "The Follies," costing $42,000 for the costumes and settings, the scene lasting eight minutes

head above water for the first month. Then they produced St. John Irvine's "John Ferguson," and the public woke up to the fact that this new organization had something new and vital to offer. The Guild entered the season the following autumn with more than three times as many subscribers, and some money in reserve.

Amazing Accomplishments of the Theatre Guild

SINCE 1919, in less than six seasons, they have produced twenty-seven plays—up to and including Lenormand's "Failures" with Ben Ami—almost every one of which had had some decided merit over and above the mere entertainment standard. They have produced for the first time anywhere in the world, G. B. Shaw's "Heartbreak House" and his staggering "Back To Methuselah," which has to be acted in three parts on consecutive evenings. Shaw told them they were "quite mad" to try it, but they did try it—and the public supported them. They have produced plays from the French, the Spanish, the Russian, the Scandinavian, the Hungarian, from England, Ireland and America.

They gave St. John Ervine his American hearing. They gave A. A. Milne's "Mr. Pim Passes By." They produced Molnar's great play, "Liliom," after it had gone begging among other managers for ten years—the first drama to hint at the new art of expression on the stage. They produced Tolstoi's grim and terrible "Power of Darkness," Strindberg's strange drama "The Dance of Death," Andreyev's symbolic Russian play, "He Who Gets Slapped," Arnold Bennett's English satire "What The Public Wants," and the new German expressionist fantasia, Kaiser's "From Morn to Midnight." They found an interesting American play called "Ambush," and a still more unusual one called "The Adding Machine."

There is no other theatre in America which has done as much first-rate, vital work, on a strictly professional basis, with the highest possible standards of acting and production constantly aimed at and frequently attained. Besides their five-year record, the record of the belauded Belasco, or even of the much more deserving Arthur Hopkins, looks small enough. Belasco hasn't produced a really vital drama, a drama that was more than conventional, ephemeral entertainment, in ten years. The Theatre Guild in five years, in a rented theatre—Belasco owns his own playhouse—with no capital to start with, has produced twenty-seven dramas, of which two-thirds are vital, significant contributions to dramatic art.

Their success has increased each season; not so much because they knew more about putting on plays, or had better actors, but because in 1921–22 they had 5,000 subscribers, instead of 300, [*Continued on page 116*]

Photo by White Studio

The costume expense was negligible, but this "living curtain," from "The Passing Show," alone added $6,000 to the cost of the production

The Maintenance of Peace

A Problem of Crowded Populations

NATIONS fight to insure national security or to increase territory, or to get access to the sea. The most striking fact of the world today is the very uneven division of the earth among the sixty-odd nations that occupy the entire land area of the globe. At one extreme, we have the 60,000,000 Japanese occupying the Islands of Japan with a total of arable land smaller than the area of Ireland and at the other extreme 65,000,000 white people in the whole British Empire, occupying over 7,000,000 square miles and ruling over another 7,000,000 square miles.

Or again, including Korea and Formosa, the entire area under the Japanese Empire is 260,000 square miles and the population over 77,000,000, while just across the Pacific, the United States and Canada, with more than seven and one-third million square miles, have a population of 115,000,000.

Thus there are nearly two-thirds as many people in the limited area of the Japanese Empire as there are in the vast territory of the United States and Canada. Does it not seem inevitable that the peoples in North America must be prepared some day either to share their enormous possessions with the peoples of Asia or to defend them against forcible aggression?

It is well to realize the truth that the greatest conflicts may be between nations both of which are right. Certainly, nothing but incalculable harm could come to the United States if the Japanese and Chinese could enter the United States according to their needs. And it is just as true that the Japanese and Chinese are most unjustly deprived of their rights to a more equable share of the earth's surface.

Both sides are right. Force will determine which right shall prevail.

Armaments in the hands of the satisfied nations are not provocative to war, but would constitute the best method of preserving peace.

If the United States and Canada and Australia should decide to share their resources with the peoples of Southeastern Asia—and such a policy is hardly conceivable—they should be so well equipped for war as to be able to share their wealth on their own terms. For the United States to disarm is to create conditions leading to disaster.—*The Editor.*

ARE those who heretofore have been advocating complete disarmament as a remedy against war, now changing their methods and advocating armament with the same end in view? Is the so-called "church element," which as an organization has been lined up behind the movement for total disarmament, now turning to armament as a means of abolishing war? I believe an affirmative answer to these two questions is permissible.

As one expression of this development in pacifist opinion, I call attention to a most remarkable series of letters, in which the topic was brilliantly debated. Two laymen, Doctor Frank Crane and Mr. W. H. Crichton Clarke, both standing at the topnotch of their professions, both pacifists in that they desire the abolishment of war, start at opposite poles and finally come to an agreement on the methods to be employed to secure world-wide permanent peace.

Doctor Frank Crane is an editor and publicist whose pronouncements are considered by many millions as lending great weight to international moral issues.

Mr. W. H. Crichton Clarke is a great corporation lawyer, a practitioner before the Supreme Court of the United States, the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia, and before all the courts of New York State and various courts of appeal throughout the country.

These two men may be taken to represent a great body of the laymen in this country, and I further believe that they represent the sober-minded press, the church, and the bar.

We must agree with Doctor Crane and Mr. Clarke that war is horrible and is repugnant to the better instincts of the human race. But our abhorrence of war does not in any way eliminate the possibility of its entering once more the stage of international relations. For nations are but masses of individuals, with the difference that passion grips nations in a greater degree than individuals, but with less conscience. If we can change human nature, if we can do away with personal animosities and jealousies and inordinate ambitions, then one may expect nations to be changed, and their policies and international adventures to be altruistic. But, until human nature is changed, we must expect wars. This is so evident a truth that it appears, upon consideration, to be elemental; yet the following remarkable debate between Doctor Crane and Mr. Clarke revolved at the start around a disagreement as to this truth.

The correspondence between Doctor Crane and Mr. Clarke is here given to the public as evidence of the present trend in American thought on the preparedness problem.

"Loosing the Four Horses"

ON February 19, 1921, an editorial by Doctor Crane appeared in the *New York Globe*. It was entitled "Loosing the Four Horses," and contained the following statements:

"The Senate Committee urges a navy 'at least equal to that of any other power.'

"Nothing but the lurid vocabulary of Charles G. Dawes can fitly characterize this monstrous stupidity. More than stupidity, it rises to the height of crime.

"Our plain duty is to disarm and to lead the other nations to do the same.

"The only way to do a decent thing among rowdy neighbors is to do it first.

"The Golden Rule is of no use to you whatever unless you realize that it's your move.

"This nation, (1) protected by vast oceans, (2) peaceful by tradition and by (3) the temper of its people and (4) having resources greater than any other land, ought

A Study in Preparedness vs. Disarmament
By Major General James G. Harbord

to realize its bounden duty to lead all the world in disarmament.

"To go on piling up armor is (1) to add to the already staggering burden of taxation, and (2) to do the one thing of all the world likely to provoke another war.

"The maintenance of great defense is not an American idea. It is European. It is as rotten as any of those old delusions that have wrecked one nation after another all down the highway of history. Dead and damned, the lost empires, from Babylon, Egypt, and Rome, on through Napoleon and unto the swaggering Hohenzollern, stand like red flags to warn us of the folly of force.

"America had a chance to lead the wretched world out of this bog. By an access of frenzied and envious folly we renounced our leadership, and now seem preparing to lead rather in the general ruin of civilization, by keeping up the old rival fleet mania.

"Every nation in Europe is stumbling on the verge of bankruptcy. The wounds of hunger and want may fever into the blood poison of war any day.

"These nations look 'with eyepits red with rust of ancient tears' to America to show them the way out of the hell of war preparedness into the paradise of law and peace.

"We repudiate our former allies. We choose to stand alone.

"Dull-witted, vain and insolent, we slap roundly on the rump the Four Horses of the Apocalypse and bid them prepare anew to trample the human herd.

"Are they who grasp the reins of our government to violate every American principle, hitch these four horses to the car of state, and drive this young nation down the path of ruin where lie, covered with the weeds of oblivion, the bones of every proud and purblind nation that has trusted the devil's delusion of Force?" he concludes.

After reading the foregoing editorial, Mr. Clarke wrote Doctor Crane a letter, quoted below, in which he expressed views entirely contrary to those of Doctor Crane, and opposed to the general argument advanced by pacifists, that is, the principle of individual disarmament among nations. The letter follows:

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Major General James G. Harbord

"Dear Doctor Crane: Would you grant a rehearing on the judgment expressed by you in your editorial entitled 'Loosing the Four Horses?' You have the facts, but it appears to me that you read them wrong. For instance, you indicate that America is the richest of nations and that Europe is fevered, hungered, bankrupt, and looks to America with red-rusted eyepits. Your inference is that all these fevered, starving men want from us are precepts and example and that our plain duty as the richest of nations in a fevered world is to disarm. You do not argue that we should disarm with or after the fevered patients, but before. Would you do that as an individual?

You truly cannot mean that America, being rich in a distracted, bankrupt, but armed, world should stand alone disarmed. Constantinople was once the richest and weakest city in the world and she was sacked by whom? By the Crusaders! Men bent on redeeming the tomb of Christ were persuaded to plunder Constantinople because its wealth had multiplied while its defenses diminished. They were strong, healthy and well-fed men, too. It took a lot of persuasion to turn them from Jerusalem to the Bosphorus. Suppose they had been fevered and hungry—what then?

Ah, you may say, that was centuries ago. Such things no longer occur. But they have occurred and are now occurring. In 1914, one nation sallied forth to sack another. Strong nations are today plundering weaker nations, and in the world today America would be foolish to be both rich and unprotected.

The fumes of your rhetoric went to your head when you pictured this great country as 'preparing to lead rather in the general ruin of civilization' and as slapping roundly on the rump the Four Horses of the Apocalypse and bidding them 'anew to trample the human herd.'

America tried to follow your advice once. She tried to lead toward disarmament by example. She stood rich and weak in an armed world and she was put upon on every side. Those of her ships that were not bombed were seized. We had no rights that any nation respected.

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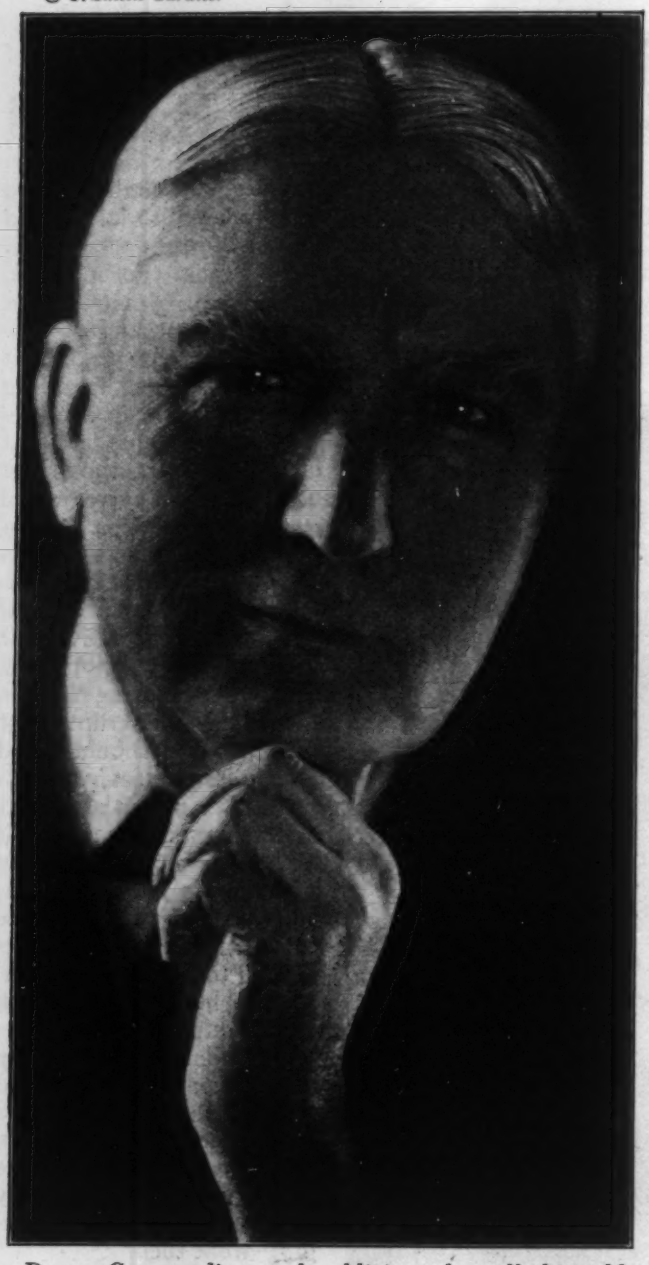

Doctor Crane, editor and publicist, who calls himself a pacifist, yet believes in naval preparedness

In arming ourselves, we are no longer leading, but following. The armed nations that flouted all our elemental rights refused to follow our example; now we follow theirs.

Christ first preached against the money changers—then he overturned their tables. He remarked the unwisdom of bridegrooms laying off their armor, even at a wedding. He showed that a house divided against itself cannot stand.

A world half armed and half disarmed is a world divided. It must become either wholly armed or wholly disarmed.

We have tried peaceful disarmament. Now let us try warlike disarmament. You men of peace persuaded France, England and this country to let their defenses lag while Germany built up hers to towering heights. If France and England had matched Germany man for man and gun for gun, there would have come in time a peaceful truce. Each nation would have realized in time that it could not have conquered its rivals and the taxes would have forced general disarmament.

But the pacifists persuaded the peaceful bridegrooms to lay off their armor while their enemies added on more armor. In short, the world became like a house divided, half armed and half disarmed, and human nature is not good enough for that yet.

The fox with a 'decapitated' tail was never able to persuade his bush-tailed brothers to remove their tails, and a defenseless bridegroom is never able to persuade his jealous rivals to give up their advantage.

But a fox with a fine big tail, or a nation with a fine big navy, or a bridegroom with a keen sword, is in a position to receive most respectful attention when he proposes that tails, battleships or swords shall be laid aside.

A tramp who suggested a general vow of poverty might well be howled down, but if John D. Rockefeller stepped forward with such a proposal—wow!

Brother Crane, let us strive to unite this divided world on a plane of armed equality so that when we propose to scrap arms we will receive attention.

Yours,

W. H. Crichton Clarke."

In due time Doctor Crane came back with the expected reply to Mr. Clarke's letter:

"My dear Mr. Clarke:

Your letter of February 21st is at hand and read with a good deal of interest. I thank you for so clear an expression of your views. It seems to me, however, that your argument does not take into consideration the fact that wars are not the result of human nature, and populations do not want war. They are rather the result of the momentum of tradition and custom and the fact that the machinery of the world is constructed for war purposes. All we have to do is to reconstruct it.

It was quite a problem to keep people from standing on the car platforms. Posting notices did no good, neither did laws nor policemen. The problem was solved by an engineer who constructed the cars without any platforms.

Cordially,

Frank Crane."

After a time, Mr. Clarke wrote again, as follows:

"Dear Doctor Crane:

Thank you for your interesting letter of the 26th instant.

I still feel that disarmament in the world must be reached in the same manner as in a mining camp. So long as 'bad men' with their weapons represent the preponderance of power in a mining camp, there is no disarmament, and the longer the peaceful citizens remain disarmed, the longer disorder and lawlessness will rule. It is when the law-abiding citizens arm until they represent the preponderance of power that disarmament occurs.

Peaceful Versus Warlike Disarmament

PIRACY and privateering at sea were never ended by either agreement or by disarmament of peaceful citizens. They were ended by law-abiding nations building up a preponderance of power and thereby overawing the lawless elements.

According to your arguments, China and India would be great forces for peace. They represent rich and unarmed nations. Instead of being factors working for peace, they have been the opposite.

The United States and England with the greatest naval forces in the world could do more to produce disarmament among the nations than they could by continuing to pile up their wealth while diminishing their protection.

It seems to me that until you men of peace detect un-

mistakable signs of disarmament in those nations which are still affected with the war fever, you are likely to promote, rather than to retard, war by persuading the peaceful bridegrooms to lay aside their armor while still surrounded by hungry, desperate and highly-armed rivals.

I wish you would earnestly seek to answer my proposition that 'a world half armed and half disarmed is a world divided. It must become wholly armed or wholly disarmed. We have tried peaceful disarmament, now let us try warlike disarmament.'

The Result of Competition

YOUR argument about removing the street car platforms in order to prevent people from standing on them reminds me of the famous boarding-house rule: 'In order to prevent guests from taking fruit away from the table, there will be no fruit.'

The car platform argument is beside the point. If it is desirable to keep people from being killed on car platforms, you should remove all of the platforms. If you merely remove the platforms on some of the cars and run them in competition with other cars having fine, alluring platforms, you would find that the safe, but unpleasant, cars would soon be eliminated by the competition of the others.

I agree with you that all of the warlike platforms, bushy tails and large navies and other military probosces of the world should be amputated, and I argue that the way to have all of them amputated is for those fellows who believe in amputation to be in the majority.

Your argument, it seems to me, amounts to saying that the men and nations who believe in disarmament should lower themselves to the status of India and China, and after they have thus ceased to have the slightest political influence in the world, to ask the other nations to cut off their own military tails.

Honor bright, the thing is against nature!

But, believe me, when the peaceful nations of the world represent the preponderance of power and say: 'The honest nations are going to disarm and the dishonest nations *have got* to disarm,' the problem will receive a lot more attention than it will ever receive if such peaceful, rich and disarmed nations as China, India and the United States say to their strong and armed rivals, 'We have cut off our military tails ; come you and do likewise.'

My excuse for writing you at this length is that the question on which we entertain opposite views is too vast and potentially too dangerous for mistaken notions to be expressed publicly, and the matter really is not as simple as you tried to make it in your article of February 19.

Cordially yours,

W. H. C. Clarke."

Replying to Mr. Clarke's second letter, Doctor Crane wrote:

"My dear Mr. Clarke:

Your letter of the 28th is at hand. Your logic is all right. The trouble is it starts from the wrong place. You are under the delusion that force is effective. My starting point is that all men are fair, all men want to be decent, and human nature is good. Eliminate the stupidity of government and get rid of the machinery that produces national hate and wars, and people will go about their business and behave themselves. *Perhaps only time can tell which of us is right.*

Cordially,

Frank Crane."

Mr. Clarke immediately replied to Doctor Crane's argument as follows:

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W. H. Crichton Clarke, corporation lawyer, who began the preparedness debate with Dr. Crane here quoted

"My dear Doctor Crane: It does seem to me that you are right in stating, 'Eliminate the stupidity of governments and get rid of the machinery that produces national hate and wars, and people will go about their business and behave themselves.'

The way to do that is to bring pressure to bear on military governments so as to make them disarm, and until they do disarm to make reasonable preparations to protect your own country. In the presence of heavily armed and hostile nations it is both unwise and unpatriotic to advocate the disarmament of your own country alone. Moreover, it is the least effective way to secure general disarmament.

You know in your soul that this is true. If England proposed general disarmament, she would be listened to; if China proposed it, she would be laughed at.

Cordially yours,

W. H. C. Clarke."

To this letter Doctor Crane replied briefly on March 3rd, in the following note:

"My dear Mr. Clarke:

Your letter of March 2nd is at hand. A little reflection will convince you that there can be no mutuality of

any kind unless some one begins. The obligation to begin is always upon the strongest. We are one of the strongest. It is our obligation to begin. I think Great Britain would follow suit. If not, the responsibility will be hers, not ours. There can be no advance in morals, either personal or international, without courage.

Cordially,

FRANK CRANE."

This letter from Doctor Crane gave Mr. Clarke his opportunity to clinch the argument, which he did in the following:

"My dear Doctor Crane:

Yours of the 3rd received.

I have you now! But I am afraid you're like myself—you won't admit it!

You say: 'There can be no mutuality of any kind unless some one begins—it is our obligation to begin.' I disagree with you.

Real mutuality of disarmament between nations means that all should disarm at once. If one starts and expects the others to follow, that is rank individualism and not mutuality at all.

Contracts were invented to avoid the very risks of that kind of individualism. The contract is the real Simon-pure thing of mutuality. 'You disarm, and I will disarm too.' That is true mutuality.

WOULD ENGLAND DISARM IF WE DID?

YOU think that if we disarm England will follow suit. If she would do that, why would she not strike a bargain to do it? And if she would not strike a bargain, why would she do the thing itself?

I want mutual disarmament as much as you, and I deny that mutuality means a beginning by *one*. It means simultaneous action by *all*.

We should propose mutual disarmament and until that is secured it is only common sense to stay out of the class of China and India by arming the same as the others.

Yours very truly,

W. H. C. CLARKE."

Doctor Crane, convinced of the ultimate success of the campaign against war by the method of "arming for peace," wrote an editorial published in the *New York Globe* on October 27, 1922, entitled "Navy Day," in which he closed the discussion with Mr. Clarke, explained more completely his position of February 14, 1921, and sounded the first gun for the new method of warring against war. The forceful editorial is quoted in full:

"October 27, 1922, has been designated Navy Day, at the suggestion of the Navy League, approved by the Navy Department of the United States.

"It is the purpose of this designation to turn the minds of the country to our Navy, to the appreciation of it, and an understanding of its needs.

"I am glad to make my contribution to this cause. I am an out-and-out pacifist, and not ashamed of it. I am also an internationalist. But I find nothing in either of these beliefs inconsistent with the desire to keep the Navy of the United States at its peak of efficiency and in its pink of perfection.

"As for pacifism, I am so much in favor of it that I do not wish to see it wrecked by unchecked and fanatic idealism. At bottom, pacifism merely means a settled hatred and opposition to war. There is only one way that wars can be got rid of, and that is by the great nations of the world coming to an understanding and entering into a pool with the object of settling all their international disputes by some international police force. Such a pool can never be formed except by strong nations equipped to deal as equals with other nations.

"We shall therefore never enter into such a compact as shall practically produce pacifism any other way than by keeping ourselves strong and ready to go in if the other fellows will go in, and stay out if they stay out. Until the time comes when the idea of universal peace and an ordered world shall have acquired strength enough to overcome primitive and unthinking nationalistic passion, our Navy should be in as good condition as that of any other nation.

"As for internationalism, the intelligent internationalist does not want a colloid or gluey world unity which discards tradition and endeavors to wipe out all nations.

"He looks rather for an international structure that shall be made up of strong, independent integers.

"In other words, he looks forward to Federation. And the gist of Federation is that each unit shall be sufficient to itself, and shall pursue its own ideals while coöperating with every other unit.

"True internationalism simply means the Americanization of the world. That is, federating the nations of the globe in somewhat the same manner as the States of the American Union are federated, although, of course, with considerable difference.

"The idea, however, is exactly the same. I hope there never will come a time when the Nation of the United States of America, or the Nation of Great Britain, or France, or Germany, shall cease to exist. Each should grow strong on its own roots. But I do hope that the time is coming when all of these nations shall become intelligent enough to get together in such a manner that their differences may be settled by law, and not by violence.

"In other words, when the battle fleet of the world is formed which is 'to keep the fretful earth in awe,' I hope to see the United States of America make such contribution to that fleet as is worthy of its dignity and power.

"Hence I am in favor of such a Naval force as shall be a credit to the country."

PEACE THROUGH PREPAREDNESS

CONTAINED in the letters of Mr. Clarke and the final editorial of Doctor Crane are the arguments which form the foundation of all the moves for peace which have any expectation or reasonable hope of success.

These letters are published at the moment when a new movement for peace through preparedness is being inaugurated—a movement founded upon the vision of our late President, Warren G. Harding. In his Inaugural Address, in his eulogy of our dead at Arlington last Memorial Day, and in his address at Denver on his fatal trip West, President Harding gave expression to the terms of an Ideal Republic, by which he meant a completely mobilized nation ready on the instant for war or any national emergency. Such mobilization would mean that every natural resource, every industry, every contrivance which makes for efficiency, and every individual capable of mental and physical effort, would be called upon for whatever service the emergency required, to the total exclusion of profiteering, hoarding, price inflation, and unjust discrimination against classes of citizenship.

The letters and editorials in the Crane-Clarke correspondence strike the keynote for this great project. A nation mobilized and armed can enter international councils with the assurance of being heard, with the assurance of contributing to the advancement of international morals, international justice, and international peace.

The Third Round

In which the Professor Nearly Loses His Secret and Bulldog Drummond His Mind

By Major H. C. McNeile

Illustrations by Marshall Frantz

For Synopsis of the Story see Page 75

IT cannot be said that Drummond found the process of explaining an easy one. The lady, having got her second wind, seemed only too ready to cut the cackle and get down to it again; and, as Drummond had to admit even to himself, the explanation sounded a bit lame. To assault unmercifully an elderly German savant in a lawyer's office merely because he was drumming with his left hand on his knee, was, as Mr. Tootem junior put it, a shade over the odds. And his excuse for so doing—his description of the inconceivable villainies of Carl Peterson in the past—was received coldly.

In fact, Hugh Drummond proceeded to spend an extremely unpleasant twenty minutes, which might have been considerably prolonged but for Mr. Tootem senior remembering that the umpires were just about coming out at Lords.

He rose from his chair pontifically.

"I think we must assume," he remarked, "that this misguided young man was actuated by worthy motives, even though his actions left much to be desired. His keenness to safeguard the valuable notes of my late-lamented client no doubt inspired his amazing outburst. And since he has apologized so profusely to you, professor—and also, my dear madam, to you—I would suggest that you might see your way to accepting that apology, and that we—ah—might terminate the interview. I have no doubt that now that Captain Drummond has satisfied himself so—ah—drastically that you are not—I forget his friend's name, he will have no hesitation in handing over the notes to me. Should he still refuse, I shall, of course, have no other alternative but to send for the police—which would cause a most unpleasant contretemps for all concerned. Especially on the very day of the—er—funeral."

Drummond fumbled in his pocket, still dazed.

"I'll hand 'em over, right enough," he remarked wearily. "I wish I'd never seen the blame things."

He passed the sheets of paper across the desk to Mr. Tootem senior.

As Drummond leaned forward to take the receiver from the hook, the curtain behind him was pulled back, inch by inch, by a man who held in his right hand a villainous-looking iron bar

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"If I don't get outside a pint of beer soon," he continued, reaching for his hat, "there will be a double event in the funeral line."

Once again he apologized profusely to the German, and staggered slightly in his tracks as he gazed at the lady. Then blindly he made his way to the door, and twenty minutes later he entered his house a comparatively broken man. Even Algy awoke from his lethargy and gazed at him appalled.

"You mean to say you pulled the old bean's nose!" he gasped.

"This way and that," sighed Hugh. "And very, very hard. Only nothing like as hard as his wife hit me. She's got a sweeping left, Algy, like the kick of a mule. Good heavens! What an unholy box-up! I must say if it hadn't been for old Tootem, it might have been deuced serious. The office looked like the morning after a wet night."

"So you've handed over the notes?"

"I have," said Hugh savagely. "And as I told old Tootem in his office I wish to heaven I'd never seen the bally things. Old Scheidstrun's got 'em, and he can keep 'em."

WHICH was where the error occurred. Professor Scheidstrun had certainly got them—Mr. Tootem senior had pressed them into his hands with almost indecent brevity the instant Drummond left the office—but Professor Scheidstrun was not going to keep them. At that very moment, in fact, he was handing them over to a benevolent-looking old gentleman with mutton-chop whiskers in a room in Mr. Anderson's house in the quiet square.

"Tell me all about it," murmured the old gentleman, with a smile. "You've no idea how interested I am in it. I would have given a lot to have been present myself."

"*Mein Gott!*" grunted the professor. "He is a holy terror, that man. He tear off my wig; he try to tear off my nose."

"And then I him on the ear hit," boomed his wife.

"Splendid!" chuckled the old gentleman. "Quite splendid. He is a violent young man at times, is Captain Drummond."

"It was that the color of my wig was different that first made him suspect," went on the German. "And then I do what you tell me—I tap with my left hand, so, upon my knee. The next moment he jumps upon me like a madman."

"I thought he probably would," said the old gentleman. "A very amusing little experiment in psychology. You might make a note of it, professor. The surest way of allaying suspicions is to arouse them thoroughly, and then prove that they are groundless. Hence your somewhat sudden summons by airplane from Germany. I have arranged that you should return in the same manner tomorrow after the funeral, which you will attend this afternoon."

"It was inconvenient—that summons," said his wife heavily. "And my husband has been assaulted——"

Her words died away as she looked at the benevolent old gentleman. For no trace of benevolence remained on his face, and she shuddered uncontrollably.

"People who do inconvenient things, frau," he said quietly, "and get found out must expect inconvenient calls to be made upon them."

"How long is this to continue?" she demanded. "How long are we to remain in your power? This is the second time that you have impersonated my husband. I tell you when I heard that young man speaking this morning, and knew how near he was to the truth—almost did I tell him."

"But not quite. Not quite, Frau Scheidstrun. You are no fool; you know what would have happened if you had. I still hold the proofs of your husband's unfortunate slip a year or two ago."

His eyes were fixed on hers, and once again she shuddered.

"I shall impersonate your husband when and where I please," continued the old gentleman, "if it suits my convenience. I regard him as one of my most successful character studies."

His tone changed abruptly: he was the benevolent old gentleman again.

"Come, come, my dear Frau Scheidstrun," he remarked affably, "you take an exaggerated view of things. After all, the damage to your husband's nose is slight, considering the far-reaching results obtained by letting that young man pull it. All his suspicions are allayed: he merely thinks he's made a profound ass of himself. Which is just as it should be. Moreover, with the mark in its present depreciated state, I think the check I propose to hand to your husband for the trouble he has taken will ease matters in the housekeeping line."

The old gentleman rose from his chair, chuckling again at the thought of Drummond's plight.

"Well, I think that is all. As I said before, you will attend the funeral this afternoon. Such a performance does not call for conversation, and so it will not be necessary for me to prime you with anything more than you know already. Your brother scientists, who will doubtless be there in force, you will know how to deal with far better than I, seeing that I should undoubtedly fail to recognize any of them. And should Drummond be there—well, my dear fellow—I leave it to your sense of Christian decency as to how you treat him. In the presence of—ah—death"— the old gentleman blew his nose—"a policy of kindly charity is, I think, indicated. Anyway, don't I beg of you so far forget yourself as to pull *his* nose. For without your wife to protect you I shudder to think what the results might be."

He smiled genially as he lit a cigar.

"And you," said the German, "you do not the funeral attend?"

"My dear professor," murmured the other, "you surprise me. In what capacity do you suggest that I should attend this melancholy function? Even the mourners might be a trifle surprised if they saw two of us there. And as Mr. William Robinson—my present rôle—I had not the pleasure of the deceased gentleman's acquaintance. No, I am going into the country to join my brother—the poor fellow is failing a little mentally. Freyder will make all arrangements for your departure tomorrow, and so I will say good-by. You have committed to memory, have you not, the hours and days when you did things in London before you arrived? And destroyed the paper? Good! A document of that sort is dangerous.

"FINALLY, professor, don't forget your well-known reputation for absent-mindedness and eccentricity. Should any one ask you a question about your doings in London which you find difficult to answer, just give your celebrated imitation of a windmill and say nothing. I may remark that if Freyder's telephone report to me is satisfactory this evening, I shall have no hesitation in doubling the amount I suggested as your fee."

With a wave of his hand he was gone, and Professor Scheidstrun and his wife watched the big car drive away from the door.

"*Gott im Himmel!*" muttered the German. "But the man is a devil."

"His money is far from the devil," replied his wife

"How long is this to continue?" Frau Scheidstrun demanded. "How long are we to remain in your power?" Then she shuddered uncontrollably as the old gentleman's eyes bored into hers

prosaically. "If he doubles it, we shall have five hundred pounds. And five hundred pounds will be very useful just now."

But her husband was not to be comforted.

"I am frightened, Minna," he said tremulously. "We know not what we are mixed up in. He has told us nothing as to why he is doing all this."

"He has told us all that he wishes us to know," answered his wife. "That is his way."

"Why is he dressed up like that?" continued the professor. "And how did Goodman really die?" He stared fearfully at his wife. "Blown up? Yes. But—by whom?" He shivered at the fearful surmise in his mind.

"Be silent, Heindrich," said his wife, but fear was in her eyes, too. "It is not good to think of these things. Let us have lunch, and then you must go to the funeral. And after that he will send us the money, as he did last time, and we will go back to Dresden. Then we will pray the good God that he will leave us alone."

"What frightens me, Minna, is that it is I who am supposed to have been with Goodman on the afternoon it happened. And if the police should find out things, what am I to say? Already there are people who suspect —that big man this morning, for instance. How am I to

prove that it was not I, but that devil made up to look like me? *Mein Gott!* But he is clever! I should not have hidden myself away as he told me to do in his letter."

"He would have found out if you hadn't," said his wife. "He knows everything."

"There was no one who saw us start," went on the German excitedly. "At least, no one who saw me start. You they saw—but me, I was smuggled into the airplane. Everything is accounted for by that devil. It is impossible for me to prove an alibi. For four days I have concealed myself: our friends all think that I have gone to England, as you told them. They think you follow, and they will see us return. Would any one believe us if now we said it was all a lie? They would say, 'Why did you remain hidden? What was the object of all this deceit?' And I—what can I say? That I am in the power of some one whom, to save my life, I cannot describe. No one would believe me; it would make my position worse."

He grew almost hysterical in his agitation.

"There is one comfort, my dear," said his wife soothingly. "As long as every one believes that it was you who was with Professor Goodman they are not likely to suspect very much. For foul play there must be a motive, and there could be no motive in your case. No, Heindrick, that devil has foreseen everything. No one was suspicious except the big man this morning, and now he is suspicious no longer. All that we have to do is just what we are told, and we shall be safe. But, *mein Gott*, I wish that we were on board that foul machine again, even if I should be sick the whole way."

The worthy woman rose and placed a hand like a leg of mutton on her husband's shoulder.

"Lunch," she continued. "And then you must go to the funeral while I await you here."

And so an hour later Professor Scheidstrun, fortified by a most excellent meal, chartered a taxi and drove off to attend the ceremony. After all, his wife was a woman of sound common sense, and there was much in what she said. Moreover, five hundred pounds were not obtained every day. With his usual diabolical cleverness that man, whose real name even he did not know, had so arranged things that his scheme would succeed. He always did succeed—this would be no exception. And provided the scheme was successful, he personally would be safe.

He stepped out at the church door and paid his fare. A celebrated Scotch chemist whom he knew and who was entering the church at the same moment stopped and spoke a few words with him—and for a while they stood chatting on the pavement outside. Then the Scotchman moved away, and the professor was about to enter the church when some one touched him on the arm.

HE turned to see a young man wearing an eyeglass whom he had never seen before in his life.

"Afternoon, professor," said the young man.

The professor grunted. Who on earth was this? Some relative of the dead man, presumably.

"You don't seem to remember me," went on the young man slowly.

The fact was hardly surprising, but mindful of his instructions the German waved his arms vaguely and endeavored to escape into the church. But the young man, whose eyes had narrowed suddenly, was not to be shaken off quite so easily.

"One moment, professor," he said quietly. "*Do* you remember me?"

Again the German grunted unintelligibly, but his brain was working quickly. Obviously this young man knew him; therefore he ought obviously to know the young man.

"Yah," he grunted. "I haf met you, but I know not where."

"Don't you remember coming around to Captain Drummond's house yesterday afternoon?" went on the other.

"Of course," said the professor, beginning to feel firm ground again. "It was there that we did meet?"

"That's it," said the young man cheerfully. "I was one of the four fellows there with Drummond."

"It vas stupid of me to haf forgotten," remarked the German, breathing an inward sigh of relief. "But so many were there, that must be my excuse."

He escaped into the church, and Algy Longworth made no further attempt to detain him. Without thought and as a mere matter of politeness, he had spoken to the professor on seeing him, to be greeted with the blank stare of complete non-recognition. And now the German had concurred in his statement that there had been five of them in the room during the interview, whereas only Hugh and he himself had been present.

THE short service was drawing to a close, and Algy, who had not heard a word, still stared thoughtfully at the back of the professor's head, two pews in front. He had noted the nods of greeting from several distinguished-looking old gentlemen as the German had entered the church. But five instead of two! Surely it was incredible that any man, however absent-minded and engrossed in other things, should have made such a mistake as that. Even poor old Goodman himself had not been as bad as that. Besides, he personally had spoken not once but several times to the German during the interview. Surely he couldn't have forgotten so completely.

But the fact remained that after the service was over, Professor Scheidstrun chatted for some time with several other elderly men, who apparently had no doubts as to his identity. In fact, it was impossible to believe that the man was not what he professed to be, especially as he, too, remembering what Hugh had said, had laid his hand on the German's arm outside the church and felt it. It was skinny and thin—and yet five instead of two! That was the thing he could not understand.

If only he could think of some test question which would settle the matter! But he couldn't, and even if he had been able to there was no further chance of asking it. Professor Scheidstrun completely ignored his existence, and finally drove away without speaking to him again.

And it was a very puzzled young man who finally returned to Brook Street to find Hugh Drummond sunk in the depths of depression. He listened in silence to what Algy had to say, and then he shook his head.

"My dear old man," he said at length, "it cuts no ice. It's funny, I know. If you or I went around to have a buck with a fellow, we should remember whether the isolation was complete or whether we were crushed to death in the mob. But with these scientific blokes it's altogether different. He probably has completely forgotten the entire incident. And yet, Algy, the conviction is growing on me that I've been had for a mug. Somehow or other they've handed us the dirty end. I confess it's difficult to follow. I'm convinced that the man today in Tootem's office is the genuine article. And if he is it's almost impossible to believe that poor old Goodman's death was anything but an accident. Then where's the catch? That's what I've been trying to puzzle out for the last three hours, and I'm just where I was when I started."

"You think that German is going to do what he said? Go back and carry on with Goodman's discovery?"

"I don't know what else to think."

"Then I'll tell you one thing, Hugh," said Algy

thoughtfully. "You'd have a death from heat apoplexy if old Blantyre knew it. And he was showing no signs of a rush of blood to the face at the funeral today."

Drummond sat up and stared at his friend.

"Which means either that he doesn't know anything about it and believes that the secret died with Goodman; or else, Algy, he's got at Scheidstrun. Somehow or other, he's found out about that letter and he's induced the German to part with the notes."

He rose and paced up and down the room.

"Or else—great Scott! Algy, can it be possible that the whole thing has been carefully worked from beginning to end? Blantyre went over to Switzerland—Toby told me that. He went over looking like a sick headache and came back bursting with himself." Drummond's face was hard. "If I thought that that swine had deliberately hired the German to murder poor old Goodman——"

His great hands were clenched by his sides, as he stared grimly out of the window.

"I made a fool of myself this morning," he went on after a while. "I suppose I've got Carl Peterson on the brain. But there are other swine in the world, Algy, besides him. And if I could prove——"

"Quite," remarked Algy. "But how the devil can you prove anything?"

Suddenly Drummond swung around.

"I'm going around to see Blantyre now," he said decisively. "Will you come?"

Chapter VII

HALF an hour later Algy and he walked through the unpretentious door that led to the office of the Metropolitan Diamond Syndicate to be greeted with a shout of joy from Toby Sinclair who was just emerging from an inner room.

"You have come to ask me to consume nourishment at your expense!" he cried. "I know it. I accept. I will also dine this evening."

"Dry up, Toby," grunted Hugh. "Is your boss in?"

"Sir Raymond? Yes—why?"

"I want to see him," said Hugh quietly.

"My dear old man, I'm sorry, but it's quite out of the question," answered Toby. "There's a meeting of the whole syndicate on at the present moment upstairs, and——"

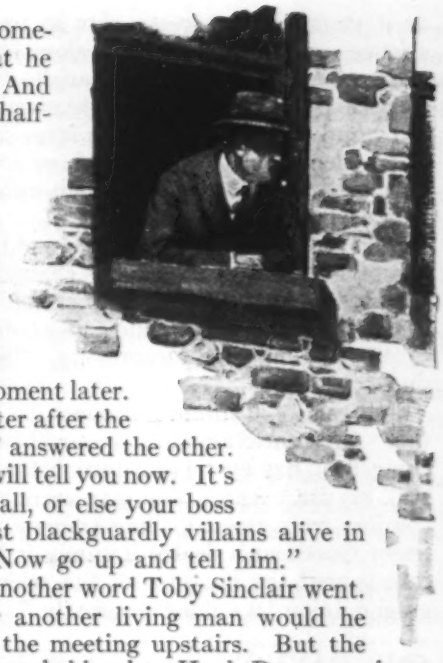
"I want to see Sir Raymond Blantyre," interrupted Hugh. "And, Toby, I'm *going* to see Sir Raymond Blantyre. And if his darned syndicate is there I'll see his syndicate as well."

"But, Hugh, old man," spluttered Toby, "be reasonable. It's an important business meeting, and——"

Hugh laid his hands on Toby's shoulders and grinned.

"Toby, don't waste time. Trot along upstairs—bow nicely, and say 'Captain Drummond craves audience.' And when he asks what for just say —'In connection with an explosion which took place at Hampstead.'"

Of a sudden it seemed as if a strange tension had come into Toby Sinclair's room. For Toby was one of those who had hunted with Hugh in days gone by, and he recognized the look in the big man's eyes. Something was up—something serious, that he knew at once. And certain nebulous, half-formed suspicions which he had vigorously suppressed in his own mind promptly stirred into being.



"What is it, old man?" he asked quietly a moment later.

"I'll know better after the interview, Toby," answered the other. "But one thing I will tell you now. It's either nothing at all, or else your boss is one of the most blackguardly villains alive in London today. Now go up and tell him."

And without another word Toby Sinclair went. Probably not for another living man would he have interrupted the meeting upstairs. But the habits of other days held: when Hugh Drummond gave an order it was carried out.

A minute later he was down again.

"Sir Raymond will see you at once, Hugh," he said, and for Toby Sinclair his expression was thoughtful. For the sudden silence that had settled on the room of directors as he gave the message had not escaped his attention. And the air of carefully-suppressed nervous expectancy on the part of the Metropolitan Diamond Syndicate did not escape Drummond's attention either as he entered the room, followed by Algy Longworth.

"Captain Drummond?" Sir Raymond Blantyre rose, and indicated a chair with his hand. "Ah! And Mr. Longworth, surely. Please sit down. I think I saw you in the distance at the funeral today. Now, Captain Drummond, perhaps you will tell us what you want as quickly as possible, as we are in the middle of a rather important meeting."

"I will try to be as short as possible, Sir Raymond," said Drummond quietly. "It concerns, as you have probably guessed, the sad death of Professor Goodman, in which I, personally, am very interested. You see the professor lunched with me on the day of his death."

"Indeed!" murmured Sir Raymond politely.

"Yes—I met him in St. James' Square, where he'd been followed."

"Followed!" said one of the directors. "What do you mean?"

"EXACTLY what I say. He was being followed. He was also in a very excited condition owing to the fact that he had just received a letter threatening his life, unless he consented to accept two hundred and fifty thousand pounds as the price for suppressing his discovery for manufacturing diamonds cheaply. But you know all this part, don't you?"

"I know nothing whatever about a threatening letter," said Sir Raymond. "It's the first I've heard of it. Of his process, of course, I know. I think Mr. Longworth was present at the dinner on the night I examined the ornament Miss Goodman was wearing. And believing then that the process was indeed capable of producing genuine diamonds, I did offer Professor Goodman a quarter of a million pounds to suppress it."

"Believing *then?*" said Drummond, staring at him.

"Yes; for a time I and my colleagues here did really believe that the discovery had been made," answered Sir Raymond easily. "And I will go so far as to say that even

as it stands the process—now so unfortunately lost to science—produced most marvelous imitations. In fact" —he gave a deprecatory laugh—"it produced such marvelous imitations that it deceived us. But they will not stand the test of time. In some samples he made for us at a demonstration, minute flaws are already beginning to show themselves, flaws which only the expert would notice—but they're there."

"I see," murmured Drummond quietly, and Sir Raymond shifted a little in his chair. Ridiculous though it was, this vast young man facing him had a peculiarly direct stare which he found almost disconcerting.

"I see," repeated Drummond. "So the system was a dud."

"Precisely, Captain Drummond. The system was no use. A gigantic advance, you will understand, on anything that has ever been done before in that line—but still, no use. And if one may extract some little ray of comfort from the appalling tragedy which caused Professor Goodman's death, it surely is that he was at any rate spared the laughter of the scientific world, whose good opinion he valued so greatly."

SIR RAYMOND leaned back in his chair, and a murmur of sympathetic approval for words well and truly uttered passed around the room. And, feeling considerably more sure of himself, it dawned on the mind of the chairman that up to date he had done most of the talking, and that so far his visitor's principal contribution had been confined to monosyllables. Who was he, anyway, this Captain Drummond? Some friend of the idiotic youth with the eyeglass, presumably. He began to wonder why he had ever consented to see him.

"However, Captain Drummond," he continued, with a trace of asperity, "you doubtless came to speak to me about something. And since we are rather busy this evening——"

He broke off and waited.

"I did wish to speak to you," said Drummond, carefully selecting a cigarette, "but since the process is no good, I don't think it matters very much."

"It is certainly no good," answered Sir Raymond.

"So I'm afraid poor old Scheidstrun will only be wasting his time."

For a moment it almost seemed as if the clock had stopped—so intense was the sudden silence.

"I don't quite understand what you mean," said Sir Raymond in a voice which, strive as he would, he could not make quite steady.

"No?" murmured Drummond placidly. "You didn't know of Professor Goodman's last instructions? However, since the whole thing is a dud, I won't worry you."

"What do you know of Scheidstrun?" asked Sir Raymond.

"Just a funny old Boche. He came to see me yesterday afternoon with the professor's last will, so to speak. And then I interviewed him this morning in the office of the excellent Mr. Tootem, and pulled his nose—poor old dear."

"Professor Scheidstrun came to see you?" cried Sir Raymond, standing up suddenly. "What for?"

"Why, to get the notes of the diamond process, which the professor gave me at lunch on the day of his death." Drummond thoughtfully lit his cigarette, apparently oblivious of the fact that every man in the room was glaring at him speechlessly. "But since it's a dud—I'm afraid he'll waste his time."

"But the notes were destroyed." Every vestige of control had left Sir Raymond's voice; his agitation was obvious.

"How do you know?" snapped Drummond, and the President of the Metropolitan Diamond Syndicate found himself staring almost fascinated at a pair of eyes from which every trace of laziness had vanished.

"He always carried them with him," he stammered. "And I—er—assumed—— "

"Then you assumed wrong. Professor Goodman handed me those notes at lunch the day he died."

"Where are they now?" It was Mr. Liebhaus who asked the question in his guttural voice.

"Since they are of no use, what does it matter?" answered Drummond indifferently.

"Gentlemen!" Sir Raymond's peremptory voice checked the sudden buzz of conversation. "Captain Drummond," he remarked, "I must confess that what you have told me this afternoon has given me a slight shock. As I say, I had assumed that the notes of the process had perished with the professor. You now tell us that he handed them to you. Well, I make no bones about it that though from a purely scientific point of view the process fails, yet—er—from a business point of view it is not one that any of us would care to have noised abroad. You will understand that if diamonds, which except to the eye of the most practical expert are real, can be made cheaply it will—er—not be a good thing for those who are interested in the diamond market. You can understand that, can't you?"

"I tell you what I *can* understand, Sir Raymond," said Drummond quietly. "And that is that you're a darned bad poker player. If, as you say, flaws have appeared in the diamonds manufactured by this process, you and your pals here would not now be giving the finest example of a vertical typhoon that I've ever seen."

Sir Raymond subsided in his chair a little foolishly. He felt at a complete loss as to where he stood with this astonishing young man. And it was left to Mr. Liebhaus to make the next move.

"Let us leave that point for the moment," he remarked. "Where are these notes now?"

"I've already told you," replied Drummond casually. "The worthy Scheidstrun has them. And in accordance with Professor Goodman's written instructions, he proposes to give the secret to the world of science at an early date. In fact, he is going back to Germany tomorrow to do so."

"But the thing is impossible!" cried Sir Raymond, recovering his speech. "You mean to say that Professor Goodman left written instructions that the notes of his process were to be handed over to—to Scheidstrun?"

"I do," returned Drummond. "And if you want confirmation you can ring up Mr. Tootem of Austin Friars—Professor Goodman's lawyer. He saw the letter, and it was in his office that the notes were handed over."

"You will excuse me, Captain Drummond, if I confer for a few moments with my friends," said Sir Raymond, rising.

THE directors of the Metropolitan Diamond Syndicate withdrew to the farther end of the long room, leaving Drummond still sitting at the table. And to that gentleman's shrewd eye it was soon apparent that his chance arrow had hit the mark, though exactly what mark it was, was still beyond him. But the agitation displayed by the group of men in the window was too obvious to miss, and had he known all the facts he would have found it hardly surprising. The directors were faced unexpectedly with as thorny a problem as could well be devised.

Believing as they had that the notes had been destroyed—had not Mr. Edward Blackton assured them of that fact?—they had unanimously decided to declare that the process had proved useless, thereby removing any

possible suspicion that might attach itself to them. And now they found that not only had the notes not been destroyed, but that they were in the possession of Blackton himself. And it needed but little imagination to realize that, dangerous though the knowledge of the process had been in the hands of Professor Goodman, it was twenty times more so in the hands of Blackton, if he meant to double-cross them. That was the point: did he?

Or had he discovered somehow or other that Drummond held the notes and taken these steps in order to get them?

And the second little matter which had to be solved was how much this man Drummond knew. If he knew nothing at all, why had he bothered to come around to see them? It was out of the question, surely, that he could have any inkling of the real truth concerning the bogus Professor Scheidstrun. Had not the impersonation deceived even London scientists who knew the real man, at the funeral that afternoon?

There was an expression of incredible ferocity on the benign countenance of Mr. Robinson as he stared at the motionless body on the floor

For a while the directors conferred together in whispers; then Sir Raymond advanced toward the table. The first thing was to get rid of Drummond.

"I am sure we are all very much obliged to you, Captain Drummond, for coming around to see us, but I don't think there is anything more you can do. Should an opportunity arise I will take steps to let Professor Scheidstrun know what we think——"

He held out a cordial hand to terminate the interview.

But it takes two people to terminate an interview, and Drummond had no intention of being the second. He realized that he was on delicate ground and that it behooved him to walk warily. But his conviction that something was wrong somewhere was stronger than ever, and he was determined to get to the bottom of it, if he could.

"It might perhaps be as well, Sir Raymond," he remarked, "to go around and tell him now. I know where he is staying."

Was it his imagination, or did the men in the window look at one another uneasily?

"As I told you, I pulled the poor old bean's nose this morning, and it seems a good way of making amends."

Sir Raymond stared at him.

"May I ask why you pulled his nose?" he said.

Drummond decided on a bold move.

"Because, Sir Raymond, I came to the conclusion that Professor Scheidstrun was not Professor Scheidstrun, but somebody else." There was no mistaking the air of tension now. "I may say that I was mistaken."

"Who did you think he was?" Sir Raymond gave a forced laugh.

"A gentleman of international reputation, who masquerades under a variety of names," said Drummond quietly. "I knew him first as Carl Peterson, but he answers to a lot of titles. The Comte de Guy is one of them."

The atmosphere was electric now, a fact which did not escape Drummond. His eyes had narrowed; he was sitting very still. In the language of the old nursery game, he was getting warm.

"But I proved conclusively, gentlemen," he continued, "that the man to whom I handed those notes this morning was not the Comte de Guy. The comte, gentlemen, has arms as big as mine. His physical strength is very great. This man had arms like walking sticks, and he couldn't have strangled a mouse."

One by one the men at the window had returned to their seats and now they sat in perfect silence, staring at Drummond. What on earth was the new complication, or was this man deliberately deceiving them?

"Do you know the Comte de Guy well?" said Sir Raymond, after a pause.

"Very well indeed," remarked Drummond. "Do you?"

"I have heard of him," answered the other.

"Then, as you probably know, his power of disguising himself is so miraculous as to be uncanny. He has one little mannerism, however, which he sometimes shows in moments of excitement, whatever his disguise. And it has enabled me to spot him on one or two occasions. Therefore, when I saw that little trick of his in the lawyer's office this morning, I jumped to the conclusion that my old friend was on the warpath again. So I leaped upon him, and the subsequent scene was dreadful. It was not my old friend at all, but a complete stranger with a vast wife who nearly felled me with a blow on the ear."

He selected another cigarette with care.

"However," he continued casually, "it's a very good thing for you that the process is a dud. Because I am sure nothing would induce him to disregard Professor Goodman's wishes on the subject if it hadn't been."

"You say you know where he is stopping," said Sir Raymond.

"I do," answered Drummond.

"THEN I think perhaps it would be a good thing to do as you suggest, go around to see him now." He had been thinking rapidly while Drummond was speaking, and one or two points were clear. In some miraculous way this young man had blundered upon the truth. That the man Drummond had met in the lawyer's office that morning was any other than Blackton he did not for a moment believe. But Blackton had bluffed him somehow, and for the time had thrown him off the scent. The one vital thing was to prevent him from getting on to it again. And since there was no way of telling what Drummond would find when he went around to the house, it was imperative that he should be there himself. For if there was one person whom Sir Raymond did not expect to meet there, it was Professor Scheidstrun. And in that event he must be on hand to see what happened.

"Shall we go at once? My car is here."

"By all means," said Drummond. "And if there's room we might take Algy as well. He gets into mischief if he's left lying about."

On one point, at any rate, Sir Raymond's expectations were not realized. Professor Scheidstrun was at the house, right enough. In fact, he and his wife had just finished their tea. And neither the worthy Teuton nor his spouse evinced the slightest pleasure on seeing their visitors. With the termination of the funeral they had believed their troubles to be over, and now this extremely powerful and objectionable young man had come to worry them again, to say nothing of his friend who had spoken to the professor at the funeral. And what did Sir Raymond Blantyre want? Scheidstrun had been coached carefully as to who and what Sir Raymond was, but what on earth had he come around about? Especially with Drummond!

It was the latter who stated the reason of their visit.

"I've come about those notes, professor," he remarked cheerfully. "You know—the ones that caused that slight breeze in old Tootem's office this morning."

"So," grunted the professor, blinking uneasily behind his spectacles. It struck him that the ground was getting dangerous.

"I feel," went on Drummond affably, "that after our unfortunate little contretemps I ought to try to make some amends. And as I know you're a busy man I shouldn't like you to waste your time needlessly. Now you propose to carry on with Professor Goodman's process, to demonstrate it to the world at large, don't you?"

"That is so," said the German. "My old friend wished it."

Out of the corner of his eye Drummond looked at Sir Raymond, but the President of the Metropolitan Diamond Syndicate was staring out of the window.

"Well, I'm sorry to say the process is a dud; a failure; no bully earthly. You get me, I trust."

"A failure. *Ach!* Is dot so?" rumbled Scheidstrun, who was by this time completely out of his depth.

"And that being the case, professor," murmured Sir Raymond, "it would be better to destroy the notes at once, don't you think? I was under the impression"—he added pointedly—"that they had already been destroyed in the accident."

Strangely enough, the presence of Drummond gave him a feeling of confidence with Mr. Edward Blackton which he had never experienced before. And this was a golden opportunity for securing the destruction of those accursed papers and thus preventing any possibility of his being double-crossed.

"Shall we therefore destroy them at once?" he repeated quietly.

The German fidgeted in his chair. Willingly would he have destroyed them on the spot if they had still been in his possession. Anything to be rid of his visitors. He glanced from one to the other of them. Drummond was apparently staring at the flies on the ceiling: Sir Raymond was staring at him, and his stare was full of some hidden meaning. But since it was manifestly impossible for him to do as Sir Raymond suggested the only thing to do was to temporize.

"I fear that to destroy them I cannot," he murmured. "At least—not yet. My duty to my dear friend——"

"Duty be hanged!" snarled Sir Raymond, forgetting Drummond's presence in his rage. This swine *was* trying to double-cross him, after all. "You'll destroy those notes here and now, or——" With a great effort he pulled himself together.

"Or what?" asked Drummond mildly. "You seem strangely determined, Sir Raymond, that Professor Scheidstrun shouldn't waste his time. Deuced praiseworthy I call it on your part——"

Sir Raymond smothered a curse, and glared still more furiously at the German. And suddenly Drummond rose to his feet, and strolled over to the open window.

"Well, I don't think there's much good our waiting here," he remarked in a bored voice. "If he wants to fool around with the process he must. Coming, Sir Raymond?"

"In a moment or two, Captain Drummond. Don't wait."

"Right. Come on, Algy. Apologies again about the nose, professor. So long."

HE opened the door, and paused outside for Algy to join him. And every trace of boredom had vanished from his face.

"Go downstairs noisily," he whispered. "Make a remark as if I were with you. Go out and slam the front door. Then hang about and wait for me."

"Right," answered the other. "But what are you going to do?"

"Listen to their conversation, old man. I have an idea it may be interesting."

Without a sound he opened the door of the next room and went in. It was a bedroom and it was empty, and Drummond heaved a sigh of relief. The window he knew would be open: he had seen that as he looked out in the other room. Moreover, the square was a quiet one; he could easily hear what was being said next door by leaning out.

And for the next five minutes he leaned out, and he heard. And so engrossed was he in what he heard that he quite failed to notice a dark-skinned, sturdy man who paused abruptly on the pavement a few houses away, and disappeared as suddenly as he had come. So engrossed was he in what he heard that he even failed to hear a faint—in fact, a barely audible pick in the keyhole of the door just behind him, a few moments later.

All he noticed was that the voices in the next room suddenly ceased, but he had heard quite enough. There was not one Scheidstrun, but two Scheidstruns and he had assaulted the wrong one. Of Mr. Edward Blackton he had never heard, but there was only one man living who could have suggested that unmistakable trick with his hand—the man he knew as Carl Peterson. Somehow or other, he had found out this mannerism of his and had deliberately used it to bluff Drummond, even as he had deliberately double-crossed the Metropolitan Diamond Syndicate. It was just the sort of thing that would appeal to his sense of humor.

So be it: they would crack a jest together over it later. At the moment he wanted a word or two with Sir Raymond Blantyre. He crossed to the door and tried to open it. But the door was locked, and the key was on the outside.

For a moment or two he stood staring at it. His mind was still busy with the staggering conversation he had been listening to, which had almost, if not quite, explained everything. Facts, disconnected before, now joined themselves together in a more or less logical sequence. Sir Raymond Blantyre's visit to Montreux to enlist the aid of this Mr. Edward Blackton; the arrival in England of the spurious Professor Scheidstrun; the accident at Hampstead—all that part was clear now. And with regard to that accident Drummond's face was grim. Cold-blooded murder it must have been, in spite of all Sir Raymond's guarded utterances on the subject.

For it had been ten minutes before that gentleman finally realized that the Scheidstrun he was talking to was the genuine article, and during that ten minutes he had spoken with some freedom. And then, when he had finally realized it and grasped the fact that he and his syndicate had been double-crossed, his rage had been terrible. Moreover, he had then said things which made matters even clearer to the man who was listening in the next room. Out of his own mouth he stood condemned as the instigator of an abominable crime.

But Sir Raymond could wait; there would be plenty of time later to deal with that gentleman and his syndicate. The man who called himself Edward Blackton was his immediate concern. And Drummond had no illusions now as to his identity. It *was* Carl Peterson again, and with the faintest flicker of a smile he acknowledged the touch of genius that had caused him to pass on his little mannerism to the genuine Scheidstrun. It had had exactly the intended effect: certainty that they had again met in the lawyer's office, followed immediately by a crushing proof to the contrary—a proof so overwhelming that but for vague suspicion engendered by the professor's non-recognition of Algy at the funeral he would have let the whole thing drop.

It was just like Peterson to bluff to the limit of his hand; moreover, it would have appealed to his sense of humor. And the point which was not clear to either Sir Raymond or the German was very clear to him. To them it had seemed an unnecessary complication to bring over the genuine Scheidstrun—but Drummond could supply the missing link. And that link was his previous acquaintance with the arch criminal.

The combination of shrewd insight and consummate nerve which deliberately banked on that previous acquaintance and turned it to gain was Peterson all over — or rather Blackton, to give him his present name. Moreover, the advantage of having the genuine article at the funeral, where he was bound to run into many friends and acquaintances, was obvious. Most assuredly the touch of the master hand was in evidence again, but where was the hand itself? It was that question which Sir Raymond, almost inarticulate with rage, had asked again and again; and it was the answer to that question which Professor Scheidstrun would not or could not give.

Listening intently, Drummond had inclined to the latter alternative, though, not being able to see the speaker's face, he had had to rely on inflection of voice. But it had seemed to him as if the German was speaking

The Story from the Beginning

LURED by the prospect of incalculable wealth for himself, Edward Blackton, international criminal, returns to England at the request of Sir Raymond Blantyre, who represents vast diamond interests, in jeopardy at the moment. Blackton's plan is to gain possession of the secret process by which a well-known chemist, Professor Goodman, has been able to produce flawless diamonds by artificial means and at a cost of less than six pounds.

Blackton, disguised as Professor Scheidstrun, a German geologist, gains an entrance into the Goodman laboratory, kidnaps the professor, and blows up the place. But when he later interviews the professor, in the guise of Mr. William Robinson, a wealthy and eccentric man of science, he finds that there is an unforeseen hitch in the carrying out of his scheme. For Professor Goodman hasn't the notes of his process, and without them he can do nothing. And the man who has them now is—Hugh Drummond!

Robinson is momentarily dumfounded at the revelation, but he soon evolves a plan for their recovery that appeals to his sense of humor. And, again attired as Professor Scheidstrun, he interviews Hugh Drummond. He gives him a letter from the professor—written presumably before his tragic death—requesting that, should anything happen to him, the notes of his process be handed over to his old friend Scheidstrun.

Drummond is suspicious because the professor's death, coming as it did after his refusal of the vast fortune offered him by Sir Raymond Blantyre for the suppression of his discovery, seemed such a strange and fortunate coincidence for the diamond interests. But he is bound to honor the professor's wishes in the matter. Therefore, he consents to deliver the notes to Goodman's lawyer, who will, in turn, give them to Scheidstrun.

But next day, at the lawyer's office, the professor displays a characteristic of an old-time enemy of Drummond—Carl Peterson! Drummond leaps upon him with a yell of joy—only to find to his intense mystification that Scheidstrun *is* Scheidstrun, and that he has made a ghastly mistake.

"Puff—puff!" he cried happily. "Naughty man kicked train!" And the train which he was busily pushing along the floor consisted of his own shoes

the truth when he absolutely denied any knowledge whatever of Blackton's whereabouts. An old gentleman with mutton-chop whiskers—that was all he could say. But where he was or what he was doing, he knew no more than Sir Raymond. He had left that morning with the notes in his possession, and that was all he could tell his infuriated questioner.

AND then a sudden silence had fallen while Drummond still craned out of the window listening—a silence which endured so long that finally he stepped back into the room, only to discover that he was locked in. For a moment or two, as has been said, he stood staring at the door; then, with a grunt, he charged it with his shoulder. But the door was strong, and it took three minutes before it burst open with a final resounding, splintering crash, almost throwing him on his face.

For a while he stood listening: the house was silent. And since in ordinary respectable houses the bursting open of a door is not greeted with absolute silence, Drummond's hand went automatically to his hip pocket. Past association with Peterson accounted for the involuntary movement, but much water had flowed under the bridge since those happy days, and with a sigh he realized that he was unarmed. With his back to the wall he took careful stock of his surroundings. Every nerve was alert for possible eventualities: his arms, hanging a little forward, were tingling at the prospect of action.

Still there was no sound. The passage was deserted; all the doors were shut. And yet keys do not turn by themselves. Some one had locked him in. The question was who had done it. And where was he? Or could it be a she? Could it be that monumental woman who had assaulted him only that morning? He turned a little pale at the thought, but with the knowledge that he now possessed of her husband's complicity in the affair he felt he could meet her on rather more level terms. And there was comfort in the knowledge that every one in the house was so confoundedly crooked. The likelihood of their sending for the police to eject him from the premises was, to put it mildly, remote.

Silently as a cat, he took a quick step along the passage, and flung open the door of the room in which he had left Sir Raymond Blantyre and the German. It was empty; there was no sign of either man. He crossed to one of the heavy curtains which was drawn across a window behind the desk, and hit it a heavy blow with his fist. But the folds went back unresistingly: there was no one hiding behind it. And then swiftly and methodically he went from room to room, moving with that strange, silent tread which was one of his most marked peculiarities. No one ever heard Drummond coming; in the darkness no one ever saw him if he didn't wish them to. The first thing they knew of his presence was a pair of great hands which seemed to materialize out of the night, forcing their heads backward and further back. And sometimes that was the last thing they knew, as well——

But there was no darkness in the house as he searched it from top to bottom—only silence. Once he thought he heard the sound of a step above him as he stood downstairs in the dining room, but it was not repeated and he decided it was only imagination—a board creaking, perhaps. He went into the kitchen and the scullery. The fire was lit in the range, but of cook or servant there was no sign.

And finally he returned thoughtfully to the hall. There was no doubt about it, the house was empty save for himself. Sir Raymond and the German had gone during the period that he was locked in the room upstairs. And during that period the other occupants of the house, if any, had gone also.

He carefully selected a cigarette and lit it. The situation required reviewing.

ITEM one: Sir Raymond Blantyre was a consummate swine who had, by the grace of Allah, been stung on the raw by a hornet. Moreover, before Drummond had finished with him the hornets would have swarmed. But he could wait.

Item two: The genuine Professor Scheidstrun appeared to be a harmless old poop who was more sinned against than sinning. And he certainly could wait.

Item three: The other Professor Scheidstrun—alias Blackton, alias Peterson, present address unknown—had got away with the goods. He was in full and firm possession of the momentous secret, which Blantyre had paid him half a million to destroy. Drummond smiled involuntarily. How like him! How completely Peterson to the life! And then the smile faded. To get it he had

murdered a harmless, gentle old man in cold blood.

Item four: He himself was in undisputed possession of an empty house in which Peterson had been only that morning.

Could he turn item four to advantage in solving the address question in item three? Everything else was subservient to a knowledge of Peterson's present whereabouts. And from his knowledge of the gentleman he felt it was unlikely that he had left directions for forwarding letters pasted conspicuously on the wall. He was one of those shy flowers that prefer to blush unseen. At the same time, it was possible that an exhaustive search of the desk upstairs might reveal some clue. And if it didn't, presumably the bird who had locked him in would return in due course to find out how he was getting on. Everything, therefore, pointed to a policy of masterly inactivity in the hope that something or somebody would turn up.

He slowly ascended the stairs, and again entered the room where the interview had taken place. Time was of no particular object, and for a while he stood by the door turning over the problem in his mind. Then suddenly his eyes became alert: there was a door let into the wall which by some strange oversight he had not seen before. And in a flash he remembered the step which he thought he had heard while he was below. Was there some one in that room, and, if so, who? Could it be possible—a glow of wild excitement began to tingle in his veins at the mere thought—could it be possible that the solution of the problem lay close at hand? That here—practically in the same room with him—was Peterson himself!

With one bound he was across the room, and the door was open. One glance was sufficient to dash the dawning hope to the ground: the room was empty like all the rest had been. But though it was empty it was not devoid of interest, and a faint smile came on Drummond's face as he surveyed the contents. Wigs, clothes, mirrors filled the place to overflowing, though there was no trace of untidiness. And he realized that he was in the inner sanctum where Peterson carried out his marvelous changes of appearance. With sudden grim amusement he recognized on a chair the identical egg-stained coat that the spurious Professor Scheidstrun had worn on his visit to him the preceding afternoon. In fact, he was so interested in that and other things that he failed to notice a rather curious phenomenon in the room behind him. The heavy curtain which he had hit with his fist moved slightly, as if blown by the wind. And there was no wind.

WITH genuine interest he examined the exhibits—as he called them in his own mind. It was the first time he had ever penetrated into Peterson's holy of holies, and though the proprietor was not there himself to act as showman he was quite able to appreciate the museum without the services of a guide. The wigs—each one on its head rest—particularly appealed to him. In fact, he went so far as to try on some of them. And after a time a genuine feeling of admiration for the wonderful thoroughness of the man filled his mind. Murderer, thief, forger and blackguard generally—but what a brain!

After all, he fought a lone hand, deliberately pitting himself against the whole of the organized resources of the world. With only the girl to help him, he had fought mankind and up to date he had won through. For both their previous battles had been drawn, and now that the third round was under way—or soon would be—he saluted his adversary in spirit as a foeman worthy of his steel. It was a good thing, after all, that he had not brought in the police. Peterson fought alone: so would he. As it had been in the past, so let it be this time. Their own particular pals on each side could join in the battle if and when occasion arose: but the principal combat must be between Peterson and him—no mercy given, no mercy asked.

And this time he had a presentiment that it would be a fight to a finish. It required no stretch of imagination on his part to realize the enormous plum which the criminal had got hold of; it required no stretch of imagination to realize that he would fight as he had never fought before to retain it.

And once again there came up the unanswered question: where was he? It was even impossible to say if he was still in England.

ANOTHER thing occurred to Drummond as he strolled back into the other room and sat down at the desk. On this occasion the dice would be loaded more heavily in Peterson's favor than before. In the past the only method by which he had ever recognized him was by his strange, but unmistakable little mannerism when excited—the mannerism which was innate and had persisted through all his disguises. And now he had discovered what it was, had actually told another man to employ the very trick to fool Drummond! And if he had discovered it, he would take very good care not to use it himself. He would keep his hand in his pocket or something of that sort.

Drummond lay back in his chair and stared at the ceiling, with his head almost touching the heavy curtains behind him. Life was undoubtedly good. Except for the murder of Professor Goodman it would have been very good—very good indeed. And at that moment the telephone on the desk in front of him began to ring.

With a jerk Drummond sat up and looked at it—his mind recalled to the circumstances of the moment. Should he let it go on ringing till the operator gave up in despair, or should he take the call? One thing was obvious on the face of it: The call could not be for him. But that was no conclusive reason why he shouldn't take it. Monotonously, insistently, the instrument went on sounding in the silent room, and at last Drummond leaned forward and took the receiver from the hook. And as he did so the curtain behind him stirred again and then was still. But whereas before it had hung in even, regular folds, now it did not. Outlined against it was the figure of a man—a man who was pulling the curtain back, inch by inch, a man who held in his right hand a short villainous-looking iron bar. And as Drummond leaned forward to be ready to speak into the mouthpiece Freyder's hard eyes concentrated on the nape of his neck. He was an expert with a life preserver——

Julius Freyder had been anticipating that telephone call, which was why he had concealed himself behind the curtain. From the room which Drummond had overlooked until the end, he had watched him strike it with his fist and had gambled on his not doing so again. Rarely had he received such a shock as when, rounding the corner of the street below, he had seen Drummond, of all men, leaning out of the window. For it showed conclusively that this accursed *bête noire* was on their heels again, though how he had managed to get there was a mystery. And when on entering the house he had heard, even before he mounted the stairs, the furious utterances of Sir Raymond Blantyre and had realized that Drummond must have heard them, too, the need for instant action was obvious.

Julius Freyder was no fool, or he would not have occupied the position he did. And not only was he no fool, but he was also an extremely powerful and dangerous man. It was the work of a second to lock Drummond in,

and rush the two excited gentlemen and every one else in the house through a bolt hole at the back into some old mews and thus away. But he had no delusions as to the efficacy of a mere bolt against Drummond, and the door was already beginning to crack and splinter as he hid himself among the clothes in the inner sanctum.

What to do, that was the question. Powerful though he was, he would no more have dreamed of tackling Drummond single-handed than he would have thought of challenging the entire London police force. He would have lasted five seconds, with luck. At the same time it was manifestly impossible to leave him in the house alone. Aside from the telephone call which he expected from the chief at any moment, there might be incriminating documents in the desk. But it was the call that worried him most. Once Drummond got that, even if he didn't recognize the voice at the other end, he would be sure to ask exchange where it came from.

AND from that, to going down to the New Forest to investigate for himself, probably supported by a bunch of his confounded friends, would only be a question of hours. Which was the very last thing to be desired. Just as speed had been the essence of the game before, now it was secrecy. At all costs Drummond must be prevented from finding out the whereabouts of Mr. William Robinson.

Perhaps he'd go—leave the house when he found it empty. But no such luck. And Freyder, ensconced behind the curtain, cursed savagely under his breath as Drummond sat down not two feet from him. Once he was sorely tempted to use his life preserver then and there, but caution prevailed. Perhaps the call would be delayed; perhaps he would get tired of waiting and go. That was all Freyder wanted—to get him out of the house. A stunned or wounded man at that stage of the proceedings would complicate matters terribly, and when that man was Drummond it could only be done as a last resource. But if it was done it would have to be done properly—no bungling, no faltering.

And then came the ring. Freyder gripped his life preserver a little tighter and waited. He heard the click of the receiver being taken off the hook; he heard Drummond's preliminary "Hello." And the next moment he struck. It was an easy mark, and, as has been said, he was an expert. With a little sighing grunt, Drummond pitched forward and lay motionless, and Freyder picked up the receiver. From it came the chief's voice vibrant with suspicion.

"What's happened? What was that I heard?"

"It's Freyder speaking, Chief. Drummond is here."

"What?" It was almost a shout.

"He is asleep." There was a peculiar inflection in Freyder's voice, and he smiled grimly as he heard the long-drawn sigh of relief. "But I don't think it would be wise to leave him here in his present condition of health," he went on suggestively.

"What does he know?"

"That it is impossible to say at present. But Sir Raymond Blantyre has found out a lot."

The voice at the other end cursed thoughtfully.

"I *must* have at least twenty-four hours, Freyder—if possible more. I'd like three days, but two might do." There was a pause. "Will our friend sleep for long?"

"Quite a time, I think," said Freyder. "But I think he should be under supervision when he wakes. He might have concussion, or be suffering from loss of memory," he explained.

"Ah!" Again came that long-drawn sigh of relief. "Then a sea voyage, Freyder, is clearly indicated. We will have two invalids instead of one. So bring our young friend here tonight."

With a faint smile Freyder replaced the receiver on its hook, and bent over the unconscious figure of Drummond as it sprawled over the desk.

"I trust you'll enjoy the trip, you young scoundrel!" he snarled.

CHAPTER VIII

THE blow that Drummond had received would have broken the neck of any ordinary man. But not being an ordinary man, he was only badly stunned. And he was still unconscious when he was carried out of a motor car at Mr. William Robinson's house in the New Forest. That his arrival was regarded as an important affair was evident from the fact that his host came himself to the front door to greet him. But from that moment it is to be feared that Mr. Robinson's knowledge of those excellent books on etiquette, which deal with the whole duty of a host toward those who honor his roof with their presence, went under a slight eclipse.

Regrettable to state, he did not escort his guest personally to the old oak bedroom complete with lavender-scented sheets; in fact, he even forgot himself so far as to leave him lying in the hall with his head in the coal scuttle. But it is pleasant to state that not for long was he so remiss. At a sign from him two men picked up Drummond and carried him into his own private room, where they dropped him on the floor.

"I will make arrangements for the night later," he remarked. "Just at present I would like to look at him from time to time, so leave him here."

The two men went out, leaving Freyder alone with his chief. And though he had much to tell him of im-

Illustration by Walter de Maris for

"Mistooken Identity"

Another of John R. Hornady's Humorous Stories

FOR ludicrous escapades and ridiculously lucky escapes, the hero of "Obie Breaks the Drought," in the November McCLURE'S, bids fair to become a favorite character in current magazine literature.

Obie reappears in next month's McCLURE'S as an unwilling high diver.

portance, for a while Freyder said nothing. For there was an expression of such incredible ferocity on the benign countenance of Mr. Robinson as he stared at the motionless body on the floor, that Freyder realized his presence was forgotten. For perhaps two minutes Mr. Robinson's eyes never left the prostrate Drummond. Then he turned to his subordinate.

"I don't think I should ever have forgiven you, my dear Freyder," he said softly, "if you'd had the misfortune to kill him. That supreme joy must be mine and mine alone." With almost an effort he obliterated Drummond from his mind, and sat down at his desk. "Business first; pleasure afterward. Things have evidently been happening in London. Tell me everything."

CLEARLY and concisely Freyder told him what had occurred, while Mr. Robinson smoked his cigar in silence. Once or twice he frowned slightly, but otherwise he gave no sign of his feelings.

"You have no idea then as to how Drummond and Sir Raymond Blantyre found the house?" he asked, as Freyder finished.

"Not the slightest, Chief," he answered. "All I know is that it was Drummond who found it and not Blantyre. Sir Raymond told me that much as I was rushing him out of the house."

"Did he make any objection to going?"

"Not the slightest. In fact, when he realized that what he had been saying to Scheidstrun had been overheard by Drummond his one desire was to get away as fast as he could. He apparently thought Drummond had left the house a quarter of an hour before."

Mr. Robinson shrugged his shoulders.

"The point really is immaterial," he murmured. "That fool Blantyre *dare* not speak; Drummond can't. By the way, what has become of Scheidstrun?"

"I sent him and his wife off this evening," said Freyder. "The pilot said he could make Brussels tonight, and finish the journey tomorrow."

"Excellent, Freyder. Excellent!" said Mr. Robinson. "And the slight inconvenience of Blantyre's knowing that I have not destroyed the notes is amply compensated for by the possession of our young friend here."

"But it will mean altering our plans somewhat," remarked Freyder doubtfully.

For a while Mr. Robinson smoked in silence, gently stroking his mutton-chop whiskers.

"Yes," he remarked at length, "it will. Not the plans so much as the time-table. The advent of Drummond at this stage of the proceedings I must confess I did not contemplate. And since I am under no delusions as to his infinite capacity for making a nuisance of himself, the sooner he is finally disposed of the better."

Freyder shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, Chief," he said callously, "there he is. And there's no time like the present."

Mr. Robinson raised a deprecating hand.

"How coarse, my dear Freyder—how almost vulgar! My feelings against this young man are of a purely personal type. And I assure you they would not be gratified in the smallest degree by disposing of him when he was in the condition he is in now. One might just as well assault a carcass in a butcher's shop. No; no. It will be my earnest endeavor to restore Captain Drummond to perfect health before disposing of him. Or at any rate to such a condition that he realizes what is taking place. But from my knowledge of him it is a matter that cannot be postponed indefinitely. As I said before, his capacity for making trouble when confined in any ordinary house is well-nigh unbelievable."

"Then what do you propose to do, Chief?"

Given his own way, now that Drummond was safely out of London and in their power, he would have finished him off then and there. To his mind, Drummond was one of those unpleasant individuals who can be regarded as really safe only when they're dead. And once granted that he was going to be killed in the near future, Freyder would have wasted no further time about it. But he knew the absolute futility of arguing with his chief once the latter's mind was made up, so he resigned himself at once to the inevitable.

"You are certain that you were not followed here?" said Mr. Robinson.

"As certain as any one can ever be," answered Freyder. "Twice I stopped the car at the end of a long straight stretch of road and turned into a lane. There was no sign of any one. I didn't bother to change the tires since most of the road is tar macadam and there's been no rain. And really there are so many cars like that one about now, that it's only a waste of time."

"And as far as I could make out the telephone operator had no suspicions," went on his chief. "You did it extremely skillfully and silently. So I think, Freyder, we can count on twenty-four hours for certain, before any one even begins to take any notice. Drummond is a man of peculiar habits, and, somewhat naturally, when I realized he was coming here I sent a letter in his writing to that inconceivable poop Longworth. A friend of his," he explained, seeing the look of mystification on the other's face, "who is engaged to Miss Goodman. It states that he is hot on the trail and the postmark will be Birmingham. So I think we can certainly rely on twenty-four hours—or even forty-eight—before his friends begin to move. And that will give me plenty of time to insure that our friend upstairs has not forgotten his process. Once I am assured of that, and he has written out in a legible hand the ingredients he uses we will delay no longer. It's a nuisance—for I detest manual labor and smells in a laboratory. Except for Drummond, as you know, we would have remained on here for six months or so, and let the old fool make the stones himself, before disposing of him finally. But since this slight contretemps has occurred, much as I regret it, I shall have to dispense with that part of the program. Once I know for certain that I can do it myself—and I shall devote tomorrow to that exclusively—we will give up this house forthwith and go on board the yacht. A good idea of mine—that yacht, Freyder. There is nothing like dying convincingly to enable one to live in comfort," he ended epigrammatically.

FREYDER grinned, as he watched Mr. Robinson help himself to a mild whisky and soda: undoubtedly the chief was in an excellent humor.

"We've run a pretty big risk this time, my dear fellow," he went on thoughtfully. "And sometimes it almost staggers me when I think how wonderfully we've succeeded. But I am under no delusions as to the abilities of the English police. Once they get on to a thing they never let go—and sooner or later they are bound to get on to this. Probably they will do it through Drummond's disappearance—and Scheidstrun. Sooner or later they will track our connection with this house, and the good ship *Gadfly*. And then when they find that the *Gadfly* left England and has never been heard of again, with true British phlegm they will assume that she has sunk with all hands. And Sir Raymond Blantyre will breathe again—unless they've put the scoundrel in prison for having suggested such an abominable crime to me. In fact, every one will breathe again except Drummond and our friend upstairs. Oh! And Mr. Lewisham. Did you attend the obsequies on Mr. Lewisham, Freyder?"

"I did not," laughed Freyder, and Mr. Robinson, contrary to his usual custom, helped himself to another whisky and soda.

"Yes," he continued dreamily, "it's a wonderful end to what I may claim without conceit has been a wonderful career. Henceforward, Freyder, my life will be one of blameless virtue." He drained the glass slowly.

The other shook his head doubtfully.

"You'll find it a bit monotonous, Chief," he said.

Mr. Robinson smiled.

"Perhaps so—but I shall give it a trial. And whenever it becomes too monotonous I shall merely remove more money from the pockets of those two villainous men, Blantyre and Liebhaus. It almost makes one despair of human nature when one realizes that such cold-blooded scoundrels exist!"

"And Drummond! Have you made up your mind yet as to how you intend to dispose of him?"

"QUITE simply," replied Mr. Robinson genially. "I shall merely attach some heavy weights to his feet and drop him overboard. I am not anxious that his body should be recovered, any more than our other friend's. That part of the affair presents no difficulties." His eyes, grown suddenly hard and cruel, fastened on the motionless figure of Drummond, still sprawling on the floor. And suddenly he rose and bent over him with a look of anxiety on his face which changed to relief.

"For a moment I thought he was dead," he remarked, resuming his seat. "And that would have been a real grief to me. For him to die without knowing would rob this final coup of its crown. It is the one thing needed, Freyder, to make it perfect."

The other looked at him curiously.

"How you must hate him, Chief!"

A strange look came into Mr. Robinson's eyes, and involuntarily Freyder shuddered. Anger, rage, passion he had seen on many men's faces, but never before such cold-blooded ferocity as that which showed on the face of the man opposite.

"We all have our weaknesses, Freyder, and I confess that Drummond is mine. And incredible though it may sound to you, if it were necessary for me to choose between revenge on him and getting away with Professor Goodman's secret, I believe I would choose the former."

For a while he sat in silence; then with a short laugh he rose. Mr. Robinson was his benevolent self once more.

"Happily, the alternative is not likely to arise. We have both, my dear fellow—thanks largely to your quickness and skill. And now I think I will go upstairs and see how our friend is getting on. By this time he should be very nearly ready to show me the result of his afternoon's labors."

"And what about Drummond?" said Freyder, eying him professionally. "I don't think he's likely to give us any trouble for the present, but it's just as well to be on the safe side."

Mr. Robinson turned the unconscious man over with his foot.

"Have him carried upstairs," he ordered, "and put in one of the bedrooms. And have some one look after him." He paused by the door as a thought struck him. "And by the way—let me know the instant he recovers consciousness. I'd hate to postpone my first interview with the gentleman for one instant longer than necessary."

"Well, if I'm any judge of such matters, Chief, you'll have to postpone it till to-morrow."

"Then it will be a refreshing interlude in my period of tuition."

And with a cheerful wave of his hand Mr. Robinson made his way up the stairs. It was six hours since Professor Goodman had started, and by now the clinker in the metal retort should be cold enough to handle. Just at first the obstinate old fool had given a little trouble; in fact, he had even gone so far as to refuse categorically to carry out the experiment. But not for long—two minutes, to be exact. At the end of that period a whimpering, and badly-hurt old man had started mixing the necessary ingredients under the watchful eye of Mr. Robinson himself. And not till they were mixed and the retort placed in the electric furnace did he leave the room.

Twice during the two hours that followed did he come back again, unexpectedly. But the old scientist's feeble resistance was broken and the visits were unnecessary. Bent almost double, he sat in his chair, with the white light from the glowing furnace falling on his face. And he was still in the same position when Mr. Robinson opened the door and went in.

THE heat in the room was stifling, though the furnace had been out for two or three hours, and he left the door open. Then, without a glance at the huddled figure, he strode over to the table, his eyes gleaming with suppressed excitement. For there was the retort, and, after cautiously testing it with his hand to discover the temperature, he picked it up and examined it curiously.

Though he had heard the experiment described in detail by Sir Raymond Blantyre it was the first time he had actually seen it done. The retort, still warm, was full of an opaque shaly substance which he realized was the clinker. And inside that, like the stone inside a cherry, was the diamond. For a moment his hands shook uncon-

Illustration by Jay Weaver for

The Custom of the Country

By Douglas Walshe

to appear shortly in McClure's Magazine

HERE is a weird story of queer adventures amid savage tribes in the heart of Africa, where a white man becomes temporary king and learns that the job has more of thrill and less of comfort than he cares for. The story of his amazing dilemma makes highly diverting reading for any winter evening.

trollably; then, with feverish excitement, he started to chip the clinker away with a small chisel.

It broke up easily, coming off in great flakes. And as he got down deeper and deeper his excitement increased.

Once satisfied that the diamond was there, and that Professor Goodman had forgotten nothing, he proposed to waste no time over that particular stone. Certainly he would put it aside for future use—but what was one paltry diamond to him? It was the process he wanted—and the certainty that he could carry out that process himself.

Deeper and deeper went the chisel, and gradually a dreadful suspicion began to grip him. Surely by now he ought to have struck the stone itself! More than half of the clinker had come away, and still there was no sign of it. Could it be possible that the accursed old fool had made a mistake?

Feverishly he went on chipping, and at length the suspicion became a certainty. There was no diamond in the retort; nothing but valueless gray powder. The experiment had failed.

For a moment or two Mr. Robinson stood motionless, staring at the now-empty retort. This was the one thing for which he had not legislated. That, owing to the unusual conditions and the strain to which Professor Goodman had been subjected, the stones might prove indifferent, he had been prepared for. But not total failure. His eyes rested thoughtfully on the huddled figure in the chair, but in them there was no trace of mercy.

"This seems an unfortunate little effort on your part, my dear brother," he remarked softly. "Are you aware that your experiment has failed, and that there is no diamond in that retort?"

The old man sat up blinking.

"It is not my fault," he said querulously. "How can I be expected to carry out a delicate process under such conditions and after the abominable way I have been treated?"

"May I point out," pursued Mr. Robinson, still in the same soft tone, "that you assured me yourself that the conditions were in every way favorable? Further, that you told me yourself as you put the retort into the furnace that everything was all right. Since then you have had to do nothing save regulate the heat of the electric furnace." He paused, and a new note crept into his voice. "Can it be, my dear brother, that you were lying to me?"

"It may be that the heat in the furnace was different to the one to which I have been accustomed," answered the other, scrambling to his feet.

"May I point out that you assured me that the furnace was, if anything, better than your own? Further, you have a thermometer there by which to regulate the heat. So once again, dear brother, can it be that you were lying to me?" With a snarl he gripped the professor by the arm, and shook him roughly. "Speak, you miserable old fool—speak! And if you don't speak the truth—by Jove! I'll torture you till you pray for death."

HE let go suddenly, and the professor collapsed in his chair, only to stand up again to face the other bravely.

"A man can only die once," he said simply. "And men have been tortured in vain for other things besides religion. To me my science is my religion. I knew you would find no diamond in the retort—and you never will. You may torture me to death, you vile scoundrel—but never, never, never will I tell you my secret."

Gently, almost caressingly, Mr. Robinson stroked his mutton-chop whiskers.

"Is that so?" he murmured. "Most interesting, my dear brother—most interesting." With a benevolent smile he walked over to the bell and rang it. "Most interesting," he continued, returning to the other man who was watching him with fear in his eyes. "Brave words, in fact—but we will see. I think you remarked before you told me the truth that it was possibly the fault of the electric furnace. A naughty fib, dear brother—and naughty fibs should always be punished. One presses this switch, I think, to start it. Yes, why I feel the warmth already. And I see that the maximum temperature registered this evening was 2000° Centigrade. Is that you, Freyder?" he continued, without turning his head, as some one entered the room.

"It is, Chief. What's the trouble?"

"The trouble, Freyder, is that this incredibly stupid old man refuses to carry out his process for me. He has wasted six valuable hours producing a nasty-looking mess of gray powder. He has also wasted a lot of expensive electric current. And we are now going to waste a little more. I can only hope that my experiment will prove more satisfactory than his, though I greatly fear, my dear brother, that you will find it rather more painful."

"What are you going to do?" Professor Goodman's voice was shaking, as he looked first at his tormentor and then at the furnace which was already glowing a dull red.

"I'm going to make quite certain," remarked Mr. Robinson affably, "that these thermometers register correctly. I imagine that there must be a difference in the feeling of metal at 1000° and metal at 2000°, though both I should think would be most unpleasant. However, my dear professor, you will know for certain very shortly. I see that it is just about 1000° now. The left arm, I think, Freyder—if you would be so good."

A dreadful scream rang through the house, and Professor Goodman fell back in his chair almost fainting.

"Only half a second," murmured Mr. Robinson, "and it will only be half a second at 2000°—this time. Then, dear brother, you will again carry out your process. If it succeeds—well and good. It it should fail again—I fear we shall have to make it a full second. And a second is a long time under certain conditions."

Moaning pitifully, Professor Goodman lay back in his chair with his eyes closed.

"I won't," he muttered again and again through clenched teeth, while the heat from the furnace grew greater and greater, and the dull red changed to white.

"Foolish fellow," sighed Mr. Robinson. "However," he added hopefully, "it's only half a second this time. And as a special concession I'll let you off with only 1900°. Now, Freyder—we are quite ready."

Freyder took a step forward, and gave one agonized shout of terror. Then scream after scream of agony rang through the house. For it was not Professor Goodman's arm which touched the white-hot furnace, but Freyder's face—and to his chief's horrified eyes it had seemed as if he had dived straight at it.

"Good heavens!" he muttered foolishly, as Freyder, moaning, dashed from the room. "How did it happen?"

The words died away on his lips and he stood staring into the shadows beyond the light thrown by the furnace. Drummond was sitting on the floor, grinning vacantly at space.

"Gug-gug-gug," he burbled foolishly. "Pretty light."

Then, apparently bored with life in general, he returned with interest to his occupation.

"Puff — puff!" he cried happily. "Puff — puff. Naughty man kicked train."

And the train which he was busily pushing along the floor consisted of his own shoes.

[*To be continued*]

The Prior Claim

A Gripping Romance of Indian War and Pioneer Life in Kentucky

By Eleanor Mercein Kelly

Illustrations by L. F. Wilford

ON the banks of the Elkhorn River, not far from Frankfort, stand what is left of two rough stone chimneys, in a still-thriving cornfield. A century and more ago these were the chimneys of the log cabin which Ezra Todd and his groomsmen built for his bride, Polly.

It was furnished in those days, the one room and lean-to of it, with stout puncheon tables and stools, also the handicraft of his groomsmen; with a bed made in the pioneer fashion, a forked branch supporting a pole whose other end stuck into a chink of the logs, a second pole crossing it transversely, and this framework covered by a straw-filled tick and a fine, thick feather bed—for Polly came to her husband with a fair plenishing. There was a spinning wheel, too; and a hooded cradle stood beside the high-backed settle at the hearth, and the board shelves, laid on pegs stuck into the walls, held good earthenware dishes, and even some plates and cups and candlesticks of shining pewter.

At the back was a batten door, thickly studded in nails, that had peepholes on either side, high and low. There was a musket in a rack behind the door, and a flintlock rifle hung beneath the high, paneless window, whose solid wooden shutter, with two small apertures in it, opened inward. It seemed to Ezra Todd, on a particular afternoon early in the past century, as pleasant and as safe a home as man ever prepared reluctantly to leave for the uncertainties and discomforts of Kentucky travel.

His wife waited upon him in silence; a lithe, graceful girl, almost wild in her movements, and barefoot, although dressed otherwise rather finely for a frontier woman, in a sprigged bedgown or overdress, cambric frills to her sleeves and cap. His eyes followed her lovingly, a little anxiously, as she brought him his belt, tied it behind over his fringed leather hunting shirt, handed him the long knife and tomahawk to place in it, and lastly the red handkerchief to bind about his forehead in place of a cap—it was too warm for caps.

"They do say," he remarked, "that Master Ames in Harrodsburg has got some new sort of cap in his store, made neither of fur nor hide, but of fine light fabric. We grow foppish! What say, Polly mine—shall I return to you tricked out in fancy headgear with a feather in it, like the fellow in the song folks are singing nowadays?" He smiled at her as he sang gaily: " 'Yankee Doodle, bow-wow-wow, Yankee Doodle Dandy——' "

Granny Estill looked up quickly from her knitting—a gray, bent creature, twisted with rheumatism, older than women are nowadays at her age, yet with the youthful, laughing eyes of a girl.

"What a pretty, gay tune it is," she said, tapping her foot and humming after him. "I do like to hear a new tune now and then. Be sure you bring me one from the town, Ezra."

He laughed kindly. "Eh, you've the gay heart, and the dancing foot still, I'll be bound, spite of the rheumatics! I wouldn't trust you at a wedding or a roof-raising. Thank you, my love," he added, as Polly, still in silence, handed him his musket. "Now the bullet pouch, though I protest it goes against my nature to have you always waiting on me so, for all the world like one of those savage females——"

Granny interrupted. "Let be! A woman likes to wait on her man, son, especially so fine and proper and upstanding a man as you."

He chuckled. " 'Tis easy to see how *you* managed to capture four husbands for yourself, Mistress Estill! But I did not marry a wife to be a servant to me. I buy my servants," he added, proudly, "or at least I shall be buying them as I sell the crops. Here in this rough life you women have your full share of the work, without mollycoddling an able-bodied husband into the bargain. I cannot make of our Polly a fine lady—not yet. But I can keep her from wearing herself to the bone in service of mine. Look how thin she is growing! It shames me, Granny. Can you not make her mind her food? I've been watching her the past few days, and I declare she does not eat enough to keep a robin alive."

" 'Tis true she eats too little—but no man can say that of your son, Ezra! Nursing mothers are always thin, be they dog, or cat, or mare, you know that. It may be she is wise to start him on the bottle, though I do not hold with these newfangled notions myself."

Ezra's face softened tenderly. "Polly must do as she thinks best there—though a nursing mother should have special reasons for learning to eat." He waited a moment for Polly to speak, but as she did not do so, he murmured to her in a lower voice, "Barefoot again? Do you not like the pretty shoon I had the cobbler make to your measure? The buckles are of pure silver, lass; I had them from a French trader."

POLLY looked at her feet in embarrassment, trying to hide one with the other, and spoke for the first time.

"I—I forgot!" Her voice was musical, but shy and hesitating, as if she had not the habit of using it.

"Ah, let be!" said Granny again, protectively. " 'Tis cruel to try to make a child into a woman all at once. Dearie me! How well I mind that I used to slip away to play with my wooden doll-baby weeks after I wore the cap and shawl myself—till my husband caught me and teased me out of it, because a live one was coming. Polly has had so little childhood, poor lamb! She was but ten when they took her, remember. And for that matter, 'tis a comfort sometimes to feet more broke to shoon than Polly's to be free of the cramp of sole leather——" She glanced down comically at her own.

"If you spoil her so," frowned Ezra, "if you encourage her wild ways, how am I ever to make a staid and proper matron of my wife?"

Granny's eyes twinkled. "Are you so sure you want her to be a staid and proper matron? Isn't a sweetheart better?"

But the man's face did not relax. "Look what hap-

In the doorway stood a tall young chieftain, wearing a bonnet of gray eagle's feathers, a stately, splendid young creature. The girl sat by the cradle, head bowed

pened on the day of the christening! When the neighbors came in from near and far, did they find the young mother in her rightful place in the chimney settle, dressed in the quilted paduasoy petticoat my mother brought over the mountains? They did not. They found her paddling the stream, her kirtle tucked up to her bare knees, her hair unbound like a maiden's, dipping the babe in the water—and him as naked as a newborn pig! What a sight for God-fearing folk on the Sabbath day!"

Granny chuckled aloud, and Ezra laughed too, a little reluctantly, as if he could not help himself.

"Oh, I dare say it was a pretty enough sight! But what conduct for young Mistress Todd, matron of a year's standing, mother of a son, wife of one of the coming men of the country—ahem!" He strutted a little, boyishly, his eye on Polly, trying to make her smile; but she did not smile. "Perhaps," he added, sobering, "it was the Indian form of christening—but we are not savages."

Granny put a quick, warning finger to her lips, and Ezra added, more gently:

"There, there, I do not wish to be always scolding, only to make my little wife more like other women. People are happier when they are like to those about them—isn't it so, Granny? And sometimes I have a fear that my Polly is not as happy with us as I had hoped to make her. Eh, child?"

With a hand under her chin, he lifted her face till their eyes met. She returned his look, long and steadily. But she did not speak. He let her go, with a deep sigh.

"I had thought the child would loosen her tongue by this." He spoke as if she were not present. "But no matter. Too little speech in a wife is better than too much, they say."

"She is a still woman, Ezra," said Granny. "Some are born so. It does not mean that they are always sad women." She added in a low voice to Polly, as the girl passed, "Speak to him, child! You will not let your man go into the wilderness without a word?"

Polly went to her husband obediently, and said with a sudden effort, "Stay!"

HE turned and caught her in his arms, his face radiant.

"Why, my pretty; why, my own dear! You do not want me to leave you, then? Yet it was you who bade me go. And so I passed my word, and Neighbor Cook is waiting to ride on with me, and I have told others that I would surely be at the meeting of Court in Harrodsburg. To tell the truth, I thought our son might be proud, some day, to know that his father was one of those to bring the law into Kentucky. It will not be for long, Polly, only a matter of a week or two—but 'tis the longest and farthest we have been separated since—since I found you; which makes it hard for both."

He kissed her hungrily, kisses which, after a moment of passivity, she returned, almost with violence. Granny knitted obliviously, smiling to herself. He put his wife from him at last with an effort, muttering:

"I *must* go now, or—I cannot—— Eh, well, black Ben shall sleep in the lean-to each night I am gone, and 'tis many a day since the savages ventured close to a settlement, thank God! You will be safe, at least. You are not afraid?"

Polly shook her head.

"Of course not"—he laughed shortly—"you who have known so much worse than loneliness! Remember there are neighbors within gunshot, and you have Granny for company—Granny and our son. Polly!" He was eying her closely, and asked again, "You are *not* afraid?"

"Don't you see," suggested Granny, "'tis you she fears for, son, you going out alone into the wilderness? Ah, 'tis the hardest thing a woman has to bear, the waiting!"

"BUT things are not as they were in your waiting days, Granny," he said gently. "The wilderness has shrunk away from us, back to beyond the Ohio water. There are cabins and farms and settlements now, all along the road to Harrodsburg; and one or two houses as fine as any in Virginia."

"You do not pass at all through Indian country?" she questioned.

"There is no Indian country," he answered, with pride, "not in all Kentucky! 'Tis ours at last, thanks to you and my own parents and others who paid the price."

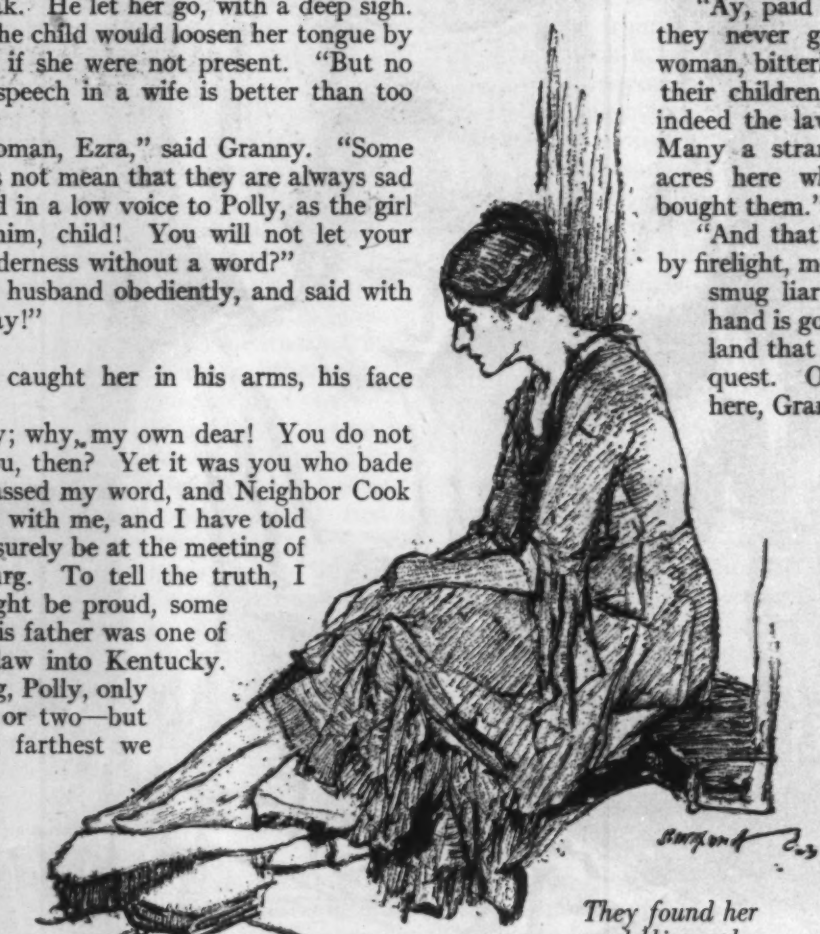
"Ay, paid the price for something they never got," muttered the old woman, bitterly. "No matter, if only their children get it! But 'tis time indeed the law came into Kentucky. Many a stranger lays claim to his acres here who neither earned nor bought them."

"And that's why I'm reading law by firelight, me and many others. No smug liar with a warrant in his hand is going to take from me the land that is mine by right of conquest. Ours is the prior claim here, Granny Estill!"

"Ay, ours is the prior claim. Unless," she murmured, "'twere the red men's, maybe—do 'e think?"

"Stuff and nonsense! What put that thought into your head? The Cherokees and the Iroquois have no real rights here. They've used the land merely, enjoyed it—free of cost. And for long enough. They've not earned it as we have, bought it with their blood and their sweat, watered it with their women's tears, enriched it with the blood of their children, such little precious bodies as this of ours——" He stopped by the cradle, gazing down, his natural orator's voice sinking to an abrupt pause.

"Eh, have they not?" asked Granny, innocently. "It seems that the red folk may have suffered somewhat, too."



They found her paddling the stream, her kirtle tucked up to her bare knees

Polly came in from the lean-to with a pair of fine new moccasins in her hand. She offered them to Ezra, still without speaking

Ezra glanced at her uncomfortably. "You're old, and the old get queer notions. The savages have suffered no more than they deserve to suffer; as none should know better, surely, than Mistress Estill!"

The old woman's head drooped over her knitting. "I have no love for the Indians, God knows! Daily I pray that they may all be damned. But"— her voice altered admiringly—" 'tis you will make the grand lawyer, Ezra, and I'm not one to be holding up mere facts to argufy against you. I expect you'll be making a speech before them all at the Court meeting?"

"Several, if they should ask me," admitted Ezra, modestly. "But I must be off. There's bread in the wallet—what, cake, too? Good soul! And tow for cleaning the gun barrels? Yes, yes, you forget nothing a traveler may need—you learned in a good school, eh, Granny? Where's my Polly gone?"

DURING this talk the girl had stood quite still, listening with apparent stolidity. But her face was not stolid. At the old woman's slight plea for the Indians, it lighted up passionately, only to sink again into the lines of settled sadness. Polly's face at the moment was older than Granny Estill's. She left the room.

"She's gone to get you a traveler's gift," explained Granny. "Be sure you make over it, son! Women can do with a lot of praising."

The young man came over to her and spoke low and rapidly.

"Granny! Get her to talk while I'm gone, will you? I've been thinking she might open her heart to another woman, easier than to me. That's why I sent for you to come. Has she spoken at all—of those missing years, I mean?"

"Neither of them nor of aught else, except now and then a sentence, more like a word or two. 'Tis as if, being among the savages so long, she had forgotten the use of her native tongue."

"She was in the tribe of Gray Eagle, who speaks English well, confound him! Still, Indians are by nature a silent folk; even the squaws do not chatter. But, Granny, 'tis worse than dumbness. Listen! Many a time I've come in from the fields at sundown and found her with nothing done, no food prepared, the wheel idle, sitting here on the doorstep, gazing. Just gazing. Other times she wa'n't to be found, high or low, had gone off somewhere into the woods, and would not come to my calling. More than once she's been away well into the night, and me searching till the hair stood up on my head with fear of what I should find. She's brooding—or bewitched, I tell you! I've been sick with the worry of it, fearing there might be summat wrong here." He touched his forehead. "Now and then women with child are took that way, I'm told."

Granny nodded.

"But they get over it when the child comes, don't they? And she hasn't—she hasn't! The past few days, since the christening here, it's been worse—lying awake

at my side half the night, like one listening for something. Ah, my poor lass! Who knows what happened to her there among those vile creatures, the years before we found her! Who knows what terrible, bitter memories she is holding in her young heart, with none to help! Granny, *you* must help her! She's got to speak it all out, and so get rid of it."

The old woman rose and put her hands on his shoulders.

"There, there, boy, don't fash yourself! Just shut your eyes—and love her. Perhaps the child knows better than us. It may be there are things of which it is better not to speak, more especially to the man you've married. Two to brood then, instead of one. Give her time, Ezra! She's but a girl; things pass. The christening was a mistake, perhaps, so soon; too many people watching her, looking to see how she behaved after living among red savages, whispering about her, as neighbors will. That's why I advised you to take her out of the settlement and win her back to civilized ways alone, with the things she knows best to help—woods and water and the open places. It may be I was wrong there. Perhaps they only remind her. Well, well, she has her baby now, and there's nothing to tame a girl like her babies. Be patient!"

"But do you help us if you can, out of your wisdom," he urged.

GRANNY blushed. "My wisdom, is it? Think shame how you mock an ignorant backwoods woman that's never had the time nor the chance for a word of it!"

"I'm not talking about learning," he said, earnestly, "though when it comes to that, you've got more real learning out of life than I'll ever get out of all the books in Richmond town. Ssh! Here she comes."

Polly re-entered from the lean-to with a pair of white, new moccasins in her hand. She offered them to Ezra, still without speaking.

"What, these for me?" He spoke gruffly, being moved. "Where did you get them? There've been no Indian traders around lately. Eh, you didn't *make* them?"

Polly nodded shyly, smiling for the first time.

"Why, how fine they are! All the beading and the stitchery and the soft doeskin! I declare, they might have been made by a squaw."

Again Granny hushed him with a quick gesture, and Ezra bit his lip.

"Well, I *must* be off. At this rate 'twill be dusk before I leave, and I meant to reach Cook's before moonrise. We make an early start." He laid the moccasins on a shelf.

Polly watched him wistfully. "You—you will not take them?"

Ezra laughed. "No, no, they're too fine for this journey; the old ones are good enough. I'll save them for special occasions—more christenings, perhaps!" He laughed again, slyly, kissed her close, and went out of the door with a backward wave of the hand.

Granny hobbled to the threshold and watched him, over Polly's shoulder.

"There, he's turned to wave again. What a foolish, loving, dear lad it is! Answer him, girl, quick! You might never see him more." She checked herself. "Whatever am I croaking about? Such days are gone."

Polly waved a listless hand, closed the door, looked a moment at the moccasins on the shelf, and seated herself at the spinning wheel.

"Now you've shut the door, and shut out all the light with it," Granny said rather testily. "'Tis nearly dark, and candles are skeerce. Besides, the sunset's pretty, I like to watch it. Let the door stay open!"

"Too pretty. It hurts," said the girl very low, her hand at her breast.

Granny looked at her curiously.

"Humph! You're over young to be having a sunset hurt you, my dear."

Polly, at the spinning wheel, was having rather poor success. The thread broke.

"Here, let me show you!" Granny spoke impatiently. "Steady, no jerking—why, have you forgotten *everything* your poor mother taught you before the savages got her? Poor Annie! A fool woman, but a fine hand at the spinning and weaving. Eh, what's this—tears? I've not seen you cry before." She gathered the girl's head against her breast, her voice softening. "There, there, was it because I spoke of your mother, and that terrible time? You were so young, I thought maybe you didn't remember. Polly! *Do* you remember?"

Polly shook her head, uncertainly.

"Then, what is wrong? Come, my dearie, tell it out, my lamb! That's what Grannies are for. 'Tain't much they haven't come to understand——"

Polly said, in a very low voice, "The moccasins——"

Granny laughed aloud, relieved but sympathetic.

"Is that all? Because he didn't wear 'em, you mean, didn't seem to appreciate them? Lord love you, that's a man all over. He didn't realize, pet, he didn't know you wanted him to show off well before all those men at the Court meeting. But he appreciated the moccasins just the same, appreciated most of all the love you put into 'em. Polly! It *was* love you put into 'em, wa'n't it?"

The girl paused a moment before answering, slowly: "I do not know. He is kind, beautiful—— It might be—if—if——"

"If!" repeated Granny. "If? Then in heaven's name *why ain't it?*"

The girl gave her a queer, beseeching look, and did not answer.

"Eh, well," sighed the old woman, "'tis your own business, sure! Reckon I'm getting to be a right meddlesome old fool."

SHE resumed her knitting, the spinning wheel whirred again, the room grew darker—would have been quite dark except for a flickering light from the pine knot on the hearth. Granny's voice came presently out of the shadows, with a dreamy quality unusual to its brisk accents:

"That smell of burning pinewood always makes me think of the forest, and of our first little cabin there in the clearing, mine and Dan'l's. A happy time——"

The girl at the spinning wheel lifted her head with a sharp movement, as of pain, which was not lost on the old eyes watching her.

"Tell me, dearie—I've often wanted to ask: were they so terribly cruel to you, those ugly savages?" Granny asked quietly.

"They were not all cruel," the girl said. "Nor ugly."

"No?" repeated the other, encouraged. "Not the women, perhaps? One of them would have mothered you, I dessay? Surely even red savage women would want to protect a poor little motherless thing like you, just coming into womanhood? And—and save her from the wickedness of the men?"

"The men," said Polly, "were not all wicked."

Granny winced. But she spoke again, very gently, "Sometimes cruelty from men is—is better than too much kindness. Eh, Polly, my girl?"

There was no answer. The spinning wheel whirred unevenly.

Granny sighed. "Of course you needn't talk to me

unless you've a mind to. Only, remember, if you've got something to forget, that ain't the way to do it, keeping it all to yourself; that ain't the way to do it!"

After a pause she spoke again, haltingly:

"Sometimes I've thought — maybe it's because I'm old, getting into my dotage — but I've thought there might be things you *didn't want to forget!* I know how it takes ahold of men, that wild, free life. It sort of spoils 'em for houses and folks and duties, and such as that. They keep wanderin' off, further and further off, till some day they don't never come back. My Dan'l, your own grandfather, was like that. But women are different, Polly. They've got to be! They've got to mind the house, and see that the fire don't go out; see that the courage don't go out in their men-folk, either, because it takes more than tinder to light that again. Else there soon wouldn't be any homes to mind, all of us wanderin' round loose in herds, like the wild beasts. Sometimes, since we got you back, Polly, I've been scared you might have inherited a sort of hankerin' for the wilderness, from your grandfather, dearie——"

Polly sprang to her feet and spoke proudly: "But I did not wish to be married to one of his young men!"

The girl had stopped spinning. She slipped over to the cradle and crouched beside it, whispering in a sort of moan, "*Nenemoosha, Nenemoosha*——"

"Ah, was he stirring in his sleep, and his deaf old Granny never heard? Takes a mother's ear for that! But you oughtn't to talk to him in that outlandish tongue, I declare you oughtn't. '*Nenemoosha*'—what a name for a boy that's just been christened a good, sound Bible 'John'! Whatever does it mean?"

"It means 'Beloved,' " answered the girl, very low.

"OH, just a pet-name," said the other, mollified, "and a right pretty one, too! Is it hungry, then, poor little starved lamb?" she added, for the baby was whimpering urgently.

The mother ran into the lean-to and returned after a moment, bringing an old-fashioned nursing bottle with a long rubber tube, which Granny eyed with great disfavor.

"Humph! What a contraption to cheat a child out of its natural rights! Don't see many of 'em in these parts. Cook must 'a' got it from a French trader! All well enough for his poor wean, whose mother died in the borning; but for a strong, hearty lass like you—— I'm surprised he would 'a' brought it to you! Don't seem quite modest, like."

"I asked him for it," said Polly.

"Asked him! Whatever for?"

The girl answered, hesitatingly, "If—if I should be taken away, like young Mistress Cook——"

"Nonsense!" interrupted Granny, briskly. "None of that, my girl! No silly thoughts. You're peaked, to be sure; but 'tain't as if you coughed, nor run a low fever, nor looked to be sickening up for something. You'll live to see the little tad followin' at your heels like a puppy, and another of him lying in the cradle. That's right!" she went on, as Polly dropped to her knees beside the baby, and bent low over him, her face hidden. "That's the place to forget what's troubling you, there with him at your breast. No more foolish fancies! And no more wandering for wife and mother of men like ours, Polly, my darling. They'll do the wandering—with us to come back to in their own good time. 'Tis a fine, thrilling life out there in the wilderness—but 'tis a happier one, here under our own apple trees at home, eh?"

The room was growing quite dark.

"Better put a fagot on," added the old woman. "Never neglect your fire, child, 'tis bad housekeeping. And then come here. I want to talk to you." Polly crouched obediently at her knee, turning up a face full of trust and love.

"No, not like that!" said the other sharply. "Sit like a civilized body, do, not squatting on your haunches like one of them squaw critters. There, that's better! Sometimes you give me a turn, with your savage ways. Polly, do 'e know why I've come out to live with you and young Ezra here, me that's got a good home of her own, and had thought to be done forever with the border life? You see, I kind of lost my courage, that time the savages got your pa and ma, and took you captive—not that I hadn't plenty of other children left, but Johnny, your father, was my first—Dan'l's boy; and nobody has their first but once.

"It went sort of hard with me, dearie. I heard it all, you see, though I wa'n't in it, Johnny having put me under the floor at the first yell—always taking such care

of his mother, that boy! I heard poor Annie shrieking as they killed the other children—she was always sort of pore-sperrited; I heard your father strugglin' and cussin' every foot of the way as they drug him out to the bonfire in the yard—a very cussin' man was John, and he wanted to make them mad enough to kill him and be done with it. But they wouldn't. And then, at the last, I heard him singing."

THE old woman was trembling violently, and Polly stared at her.

"*Singing?*" she repeated.

"Ay, can't you remember? Can't you remember even that? I'd like you to remember that! But maybe they'd carried you out of hearing. I couldn't stand it any more, I had to see what they were doing to my boy. So I crept along under the floor till I found a chink in the logs I could peep out of. They had him marching round and round a stake, with the fire licking at him already; and this was the song he sang"—Granny's face was lifted, with eyes closed, like some old sibyl's, and she raised a quavering voice to the tune of "Wearing of the Green"—

" 'Oh, you who are in hiding,
Lie low just where you be,
And don't you stir or whisper
No matter what befalls.'

"He was warning me, you see," she whispered. "Still taking care of his mammy; and him with the flames licking his body, and them he loved lying dead at his feet——"

Her voice died away, and Polly reached up a hand to stroke her cheek, her breast.

"My father," she murmured proudly, "that was my father! But"—quickly—"Gray Eagle was not there, he was not chief then. He never tortures—only kills," she added quickly.

"Killin's bad enough," said Granny grimly, "when it happens to them you love. Wait and see!" She paused suddenly, her face tense. "Queer, to hear turkeys gobbling in the corn this time of year. I must have imagined it, talking about Indians. They used to make sounds like that; or like whippoorwills——"

At that moment the note of a whippoorwill sounded, distinct and clear. Granny pulled herself together, with a short laugh.

"I DECLARE I'm getting as timid and notional as town folks, scaring myself with my own tales! Well, Polly, I started to tell you why I've come out again to the sort of place I never expected to see more. 'Twa'n't to help you when the baby borned—plenty of neighbor women to do that, nowadays. 'Twas because—I didn't like what I was hearin' about my granddaughter, Johnny's girl. It didn't seem to me you was doin' us credit. Always mopin' and pindlin' around, humoring yourself!

"Why, Polly, my child, don't you know 'tis a wife's first duty to go cheerful about her house, even if she don't feel to be cheerful inside? And why you shouldn't feel to be cheerful beats me!"

Polly laid her cheek against her grandmother's knee, a caressing, disarming gesture that was very sweet.

"Listen," said Granny, more gently. "I got to confess something. When Simon Kenton come and told me he was making up a party of our boys to go and rescue a blue-eyed child he'd seen in a tepee over in the Ohio country, Polly, I prayed—it wa'n't you. I did so! Many's the hour I'd spent on my knees, asking God to see that you was dead, thanking Him for taking your parents before they knew what had come to you—you so pretty and tender, just coming into womanhood. And when runners come in ahead to say it really was you they'd found and were fetching back, I says to myself: 'To what? What is there in life for a girl who's been the—the plaything of savage brutes? What decent man would marry her after this, and let her mother his children?' Ah, I'd seen captives

Slowly a head appeared above the window ledge—an Indian head, crowned with feathers. Polly stared at it as if paralyzed

brought back before, and I knew what it meant!

"But Simon Kenton made me ashamed of those black thoughts. He told me that out here in the wild places men had come to realize that purity is something which comes from within, not without; that a woman's honor couldn't possibly be harmed by anybody or anything, except herself. And then he told me that one of the finest young men in his company had already bespoke your hand. Eh, that was a wonderful hearing, a brave and beautiful hearing!"

Polly sprang erect, and spoke proudly.

"But I did not wish to be married to one of his young men!"

"No, poor child," said the other, with great gentleness. "'Twas a feeling that did you credit, as all thought. But since Ezra Todd was willing to take the chance—you see the importance of getting you married, and quickly, too! A fine, upstanding fellow, Ezra! Look what he's done already: cleared his land, planted it to corn and orchard, bought you a good stout nigger to do the work many a housewife has to do for herself, built this comfortable cabin, given you clothes such as any town lady might envy. Ah, Polly, have you no gratitude?"

"Yes," said the girl.

"Well, I should hope so! And what a wedding it was! The liveliest I ever saw, though I've seen a-plenty of gay ones, had a few myself, for that matter. Neighbors riding in from miles about, Simon Kenton and all his hunters to help with the roof-raising, Master Boone himself come to do honor to my grandchild—for Dan Boone knows well what it is to lose a girl to the savages, and get her again. Such dancing and eating and drinking—and courting! I vow there wasn't a sober man in our neighborhood for the whole week. And even some of the women." She chuckled reminiscently. "'Twas more than just a wedding, you see, 'twas a public rejoicing, a real triumph—for everyone, it seemed like, except the bride. Not that people didn't understand, my dearie! More than one said to me, 'Poor maid, she's mazed yet with her own good fortune, thinking on the horrors she's escaped.' But now"—the old voice grew stern—"they don't understand. Ezra himself, your husband, don't understand—— Polly! Are you listening to me?"

The Indian returned the girl's gaze, then glanced swiftly about the room

THE girl was alert, rigid, her eyes fixed on the window. She lifted a cautious hand.

"Ssh! There! Something moves outside."

Granny rose vigorously, though with the aid of her cane, and went to the window.

"Who's there?" she demanded. "Oh—you, black Ben! What are you doing tiptoeing around, startling people? Didn't the master tell you to stay in the lean-to after dark, until he gets back?"

A voice spoke from without.

"Yais'm, ole miss. I 'lowed I'd better slip down to de pound to see whaffor de cattle makin' such a to-do. Ack like dey skeert o' suthin."

"Dearie me," said Granny, "I hope it isn't a wildcat! I doubt if I could kill one of the critters nowadays." She laughed. "Did I ever tell you about the time I killed a wildcat, Polly, a real painter?"

She paused as she passed the chimney shelf, noticing something on it which she picked up to examine.

"Why, 'tis an eagle's feather, a gray one. It's some time since I've seen an eagle near the settlements. They seem to be passing with the Indians. Where'd it come from, do you reckon?"

"I found it," replied the girl, slowly. "On our doorstep. Two days ago."

"ON our step? Well, well! After the chickens, of course. But it comes close. I must tell Ben to watch for it—he's a good shot, for a nigger. Well, about my wildcat, child. Get your knitting; a good housewife never sits idle. We won't need lights for that. I don't hold with this newfangled way of lighting a dip as soon as you'd say jack-robinson. Rank wastefulness, I call it. Get you a stool and sit beside me—no, closer. I like to be able to touch your pretty hair now and then, just to be sure you're here. For so long—you weren't."

The girl seated herself between Granny and the cradle, facing the window, toward which the other's shoulder was turned.

"'Tis a long story," began the old woman, "but then all of mine are that. You're patient with a garrulous old tongue, dearie. It happened afore we come over the mountains, Dan'l and me—your real grandfather, you know, the first of my husbands. He was away at the time—he was mostly away, being that sort—and I had your father Johnny in the cradle, and another coming, as usual; when one evening toward dusk, like now, I heard a commotion in the hen yard. I seized my musket and run out. And there in the midst of the fowl crouched a wildcat! I outs with a screech and ups with my gun, not having time to take aim; and then I started to the cabin at a run, the critter after me. It was a race for life, and I reckon the painter'd have won it—his first leap landed so close that his claws tore my petticoat. But out of the door comes our old hound Jinny, rampaging, she having a litter of pups under my bed at the time and fierce as a lion with it—and the painter got her instead of me, laying her wide open with one rip. I was so mad about poor old Jinny that I forgot how scared I was, and turned and busted that cat's head in with the butt of the gun—I did so!"

Polly seemed to be listening, tensely.

"You do well to hearken to me brag," said Granny, with a placid chuckle. "For I was certainly as brave as you make 'em, those days! Like Jinny with her litter of pups. When Dan'l come back he was proud of me, said it wa'n't no use wasting a gun on a woman of my ability, all I needed was a broom handle."

Slowly, while she spoke, a head had appeared above the window ledge—an Indian head, crowned with feathers. Polly stared at it as if paralyzed. The Indian returned her gaze, gave a swift glance about the room, made a slight movement of the head backward, and disappeared. Polly's hand reached back to clutch convulsively at the cradle. She spoke breathlessly, haltingly:

"And now—the time my Daniel grandfather disappeared—tell about that!"

Granny sighed deeply. "What, another tale? Eh,

well, it is your story, too! Dan'l had always the wanderfoot; he was a great one for wanting to see the far side of things. He'd urge and beg me to go along—but how could I, me with small children? We quarreled about it a good deal. But I always said to him—for that sort must never be apron-tied—I said, 'You go first, and if it's so grand over there as you think, come back one of these days in your coach-and-four and fetch your family.' Again and again he'd get so mad he'd take me at my word—only to come slipping meekly home after a week or a month, or maybe two of them. Because he loved me, you see, for all my quarrelin' ways."

"Yes. And you him?" queried the girl, softly.

"Eh, child, better than you know! Better than I knew myself, perhaps."

"Better than—your children?" whispered Polly.

GRANNY'S head drooped. "I'm afraid so. Women can't help their feelings, even when they do their duty—or what seems to them such. Once, he was gone so long that folks said he wa'n't coming back. A hunter told me he was dead, that he'd seen Dan'l's curly red scalp drying at the door of an Indian tepee. And so he had! Only some folks are tough enough to outlive even a scalping. They pestered me to be marrying again; they would not let me be. A woman has no chance to mourn her dead in peace in this country—we're too skeerce. So I promised at last to marry the man that wanted me worst. But on the day set for the wedding, what should I hear but a musket shot, in the woods beyond my clearing—a musket whose voice I knew well! It was my Dan'l's Betsey-gun."

"Ah-h!" Polly took the corner of her apron, and wiped the old woman's eyes.

"Eh, was I crying? I didn't know. Well, the time come when Dan'l really was gone, for good and all. I couldn't believe it at first, though since he'd lost his scalp he was always off hunting for it, had got sort of queer-like. Two, three years I waited, the men pestering me nigh out of my wits, for I was a comely wench then, and a good cook, too. And at last I married the poor soul I'd had to disappoint before. After his death—he died in his bed, for a wonder—I took me another, and come on over the mountains with him; hunting for Dan'l, I do believe, though I wouldn't have told it to myself. And when the Indians got that one, I wedded my fourth—all good men and true, they were, who gave me their love, and my children, and something to do for, you know. But still"—the old voice sank to a whisper—"many's the night I lay awake beside the man I was married to at the time, with his baby asleep in the crook of my arm, listening, listening for the sound of Dan'l's Betsey-gun——"

"And if you had heard it?" demanded the girl, with strange eagerness.

"Ah!" The old woman made a wide gesture of surrender. "If I had heard it, I should have risen up out of that bed, mother to many that I was—ay, and grandmother, too—and I should have gone to him, gone to the love of my youth, my Dan'l. For I knew by then that he was my man—he and no other. A woman belongs to the one mate only, no matter how many take her after——"

"Yes!" Polly had risen to her feet, her face alight. "'A woman belongs to the one mate only,'" she repeated. "Now I will tell you, now you will understand. Grandmother! They took me from my mate. Only one moon we had together—and they took me away. I tried to tell them, but they would not listen; they thought me crazed. I tried to hide from them, but they found me. I tried to slip away and go to him, but they brought me back. And now they have given me to another, and tell me I must forget. How can I forget? What right have I to forget? You think that my man forgets? No! It would not be hard to love this other one, he is young, kind, handsome—but Indians do not mate often, like palefaces. To them that is shame. The moon looks at me sternly, so that I cannot sleep; the forest calls to me and I cannot go; when there is rain on this strange roof I close my eyes and think it is beating upon our tepee beyond the water. But I have not known where I shall find him again, nor how."

Granny was gasping. "My girl, my girl! Light the candle, quick! I cannot see you. What are you telling me? A red man, a savage, the murderer of your own people? You would bring such disgrace as this on decent folk? But no, no, you are mad, my poor lamb! Ezra was right—the horror has turned your wits. There, there, my pretty! We will protect you. Ezra will not let them take you again. And the baby will comfort and heal——"

A sudden cry of terror from without drowned her speech, a savage yell, the negro's voice panting as he neared the cabin:

"Injuns! Injuns! Lemme in, miss, open de do'! Fo' Gawd's sake, lemme *in!* Aie-e-e!" A shriek died into silence.

Again the savage yell, much closer.

Granny was already out of her chair, stick and rheumatism forgotten, and across the cabin with the agility of a cat.

"The bars—quick!" she panted, as she ran. "Get those bars across the door. I'll take care of the window." She slammed the shutter as she spoke. "Now the door to the lean-to—come, help me push the table against it. Now the settle—so!" She was everywhere at once, cap off, gray hair flying. "Don't stand there, gaping! Here, take a shot through the shutter chink, even if you hit nothing. It'll bring help."

She herself was sighting carefully at one of the door portholes. There was a loud report, a choking grunt.

"There!" she said grimly. "I got him. They're in the lean-to, they'll be on the roof next. Um, I thought so!" She listened a moment, her eyes lifted, then darted to the bed, seized a pillow, slashed it open with the bread knife, and dumped the contents on the flames. A burst of smoke set them coughing. "Aha!" she muttered. "You would, would you? I'm onto your tricks, nasty devils! You'll not get in the chimney way, so long as the feathers last. Shoot, girl, shoot, I tell you! Let 'em think we've men in here. We'll stand them off till the neighbors come."

SHE was reloading her flintlock with deft and steady hands. The girl, who had hitherto obeyed instructions like one dazed, stood irresolute in the center of the room, gazing from door to cradle, and back again. A tomahawk struck the door, came halfway through, and stuck, quivering.

"They're too many of 'em, they'll get in," groaned Granny, shaking her fist at it. "But don't give up, *whatever happens to me*—you hear? I can delay them awhile, maybe. You take the bread knife and fight for your life, Polly Todd—for more than your life, remember! Laugh, scream like one crazed—they spare mad folk sometimes. Fight 'em off tooth and nail, till help comes. Remember why! Your husband, the child——"

Step by step, Polly had moved toward the door. Over her shoulder she watched the old woman, who was at the window, her back turned, sighting for another shot. Her lip was drawn up so that the teeth showed. She shivered, slid the bars, and opened the door.

Indians slipped past her and leaped upon the old woman. Polly screamed:

"No! Grandmother, *look out!* No!"

The last of the Indians to enter was a tall young chieftain, wearing a bonnet of gray eagle's feathers. He lifted his hand with a gesture of quiet dignity, and spoke slowly and gravely:

"We know of old this white woman—her years and courage. Do not fear for her."

HE faced Polly in silence, a stately, splendid young creature in blanket and loin cloth, painted as to face and body, but not for war. His was the regalia of a bridegroom. The girl sat by the cradle in an attitude of complete submission, hands folded, head bowed.

Meanwhile Granny battled desperately with the Indians who held her, grinning. They bound her hands behind her, forced her down upon a stool, tying her feet to its legs, but never hurting her.

She did not cease for a moment her maledictions. "You vile devils! You thieves, you murderers! Wait til' my grandson catches you! Steal what you can find—there's food, gear, money—but let you lay so much as a finger on that girl or her child, and he'll get you if he has to go to hell for you. Ezra!" she screamed suddenly. "Help! Help! Take your dirty hand out of my mouth, you fiend! You'll not stop me yelling until you kill me. Ezra-ah-h!"

They gagged her with her own knitting, but still she strained at her thongs, spluttering, glaring, cursing them with her fierce eyes. The Indians laughed among themselves. One said: "Old Long-knife squaw heap big fighting brave—ugh!"

They began to run about rapidly, picking up everything in sight, always with a cautious eye on Gray Eagle, however. One tied an apron around his waist, so that it hung down behind; one spied the moccasins Polly had sewed for Ezra, and appropriated them with a grunt of satisfaction; another seized the bread knife, and made a pass with it at the old woman, who did not wince.

The chieftain spoke at last, gravely:

"The Moon-maid has waited for me?"

"Ah, too long," whispered Polly.

He smiled. "That is well. The Eagle bides his time. He has no desire to strike, only to take in peace what is his. Come, then."

He turned to the door, and the girl followed. Granny strained forward, glaring terribly, struggling to be heard; but the girl did not look at her. Then from the cradle came a faint, thin wail.

Polly started, like one waking from a trance, and rushed back to the cradle. The Indian followed. Hearing him, she turned at bay, both arms stretched backward over the cradle as if in protection. He put her aside, and leaned over to look, frowning.

"Ho!" he muttered. "A man-child. The Moon-maid's son?"

She nodded, fearfully.

"A white child," he said, still gazing. "And too young. It is not mine. The Moon-maid has lied!"

His hand went to the tomahawk at his belt.

Polly cried out, sank to her knees, her arms embracing his legs.

"No, *no!* Listen! The baby is mine, mine! But you did not come, they were my people, what was I to do? I but one and they so many! In my heart I waited. Granny! Granny, tell him——"

THE Indian looked down at her, his face slowly relaxing. He turned to the door again, saying, "Come!"

Polly, with a gasp of relief, bent quickly to pick up the child, but he stopped her with a stern gesture.

"No. It is not my son. Gray Eagle is no thief."

She moaned. "You mean, I am to leave him? But how can I, how can I? Not yet! He will be hungry." Her two hands went with a piteous gesture to her breasts.

Gray Eagle said: "Choose."

He stalked to the door and out. The other Indians followed. Polly stared after them, wringing her hands, whimpering like an animal. She met the intent gaze of her grandmother fixed upon her.

"What shall I do? What shall I *do?* You tell me! I knew it would be so. He will not come again—unless—to kill! And how shall I find him? How shall I ever go to him? Yet my baby, my little son——"

Slowly, stiffly, the old woman's head turned until her eyes indicated the door through which the Indian had gone.

Polly covered her face with her arms.

"You mean, I am to go? You tell me that?" She went to the old woman, stroking the wrinkled cheeks, the hands, desperately. "It is good-by, then! Ezra—you will make him understand, remind him of what he said about the prior claim? Tell him—tell him I would have stayed, perhaps—if I could——"

Without another glance at the cradle, she ran out. The old woman's eyes closed, as if in unbearable pain. Then they opened again, suddenly, for Polly was back.

"I cannot. I *cannot!*" she whimpered,

Ezra appeared in the doorway, grasping the side as if spent. "Dark in here—dark!" he muttered. "Polly, are you here?"

running to the cradle. She lifted the baby, rolled it close in a blanket as if to hide it, and ran out, holding it close.

Granny strained forward, listening intently. Then after a moment came a wild wail:

"No, no, you shall not! Give him to me, *give* him. He is mine! I beg, I *beg* you not—— *Nenemoosha, Nenemoosha*——"

The old woman's eyes almost started out of their sockets, two great tears burst from them—and then the door opened and Gray Eagle re-entered, carrying the rolled blanket. He laid it in the cradle without comment, and went out, closing the door behind him.

Presently there came a distant sound that made Mistress Estill shrink and quiver—the triumphant scalp-halloo of the Iroquois, receding.

Then silence reigned. There was no sound from the cradle. Granny had long ceased to struggle. The candle guttered and went out; the embers on the hearth died into blackness. Night passed.

WITH the first faint gray of dawn, galloping hoofs approached, then the voice of Ezra Todd was to be heard calling strongly: "Polly, Polly, my wife! I am here, coming." A short, sharp cry, and Ezra appeared in the doorway, grasping at the sides of it like one spent.

"Dark in here, dark," he muttered. "I must make a light—oh, my God, I dare not! Polly, *Polly*, are you here?" His voice rose to a cry, then steadied itself. "What chance, with the negro dead, and an Indian body in the yard! They were in haste, to have left that. Oh, damn them!" He was moving about like a drunken man, feeling for the candle. Granny made a slight sound. He started violently. "What's that? Not all dead? Oh, quick, quick!" His shaking hand managed at last to strike a spark from the tinder box. The candle flared. He leaped toward the old woman.

"Ah-h! Only you! What have they done with her? Where is my wife? But you can't speak yet, of course not! Patience, man, patience." Thus exhorting himself, he removed the gag, loosened her, brought water, liquor, all in a terrible, clumsy haste, muttering as he worked.

"They told me at Cook's that Indian canoes had been seen. I turned back, rode all night—the mare's foundered. But too late. Ben killed, Polly gone—where, where? Ah! Now you can speak. Quick, woman!"

Granny struggled for her voice. Perhaps she was also struggling for time to collect her wits.

"Come, come, in mercy's name!" groaned Ezra. "Tell me at least if they got Polly!"

Granny nodded, gulping.

"And the child—they took the baby, too?"

Granny shook her head, pointing a tremulous hand toward the cradle at which she did not look.

"So! They separated my poor lass from her child? The hell hounds! And now, which way? Answer me!" In hysterical impatience he shook her. "Tell me which *way* they went, up or down stream?"

The old woman gulped and gurgled unintelligibly, and he sprang away as if he could bear no more.

"If you won't help me, I must go. I'm sorry for you, I will send neighbors—but I must go!"

Granny made a hoarse effort: "Go—where?"

"Where? In God's name! To find my wife."

"No use," croaked Granny.

Ezra cried out. "No use? Don't, don't say it, woman! I've not lost my wits, or my woodcraft. See, I'm quite steady!" He held out a hand that trembled like a leaf. "There'll be some trace, we'll find her. The neighbors are out. We found her before, we shall again——"

"No use," Granny croaked once more. The tears streamed unheeded down her cheeks.

It was the tears that made him understand—Mistress Estill was no weeping female. He backed from her until he reached a table, and leaned on it heavily, as if he could no longer stand erect.

"You are trying to tell me—that they did not take Polly—alive?"

Granny had found her voice at last. She told her lie with pride.

"Take Polly alive? How should they take her alive—my granddaughter! You think she would not hold herself too dear for that? Your wife, the mother of your son? She might well have gone with them unharmed; some women do, more shame to them! But not her. She fought them off, fought them like any wildcat. 'Take your foul hands from me,' she said, 'for I belong to the one man only—my husband! Dead you may take me if you can, but living no other man shall have me—never!' "

The man's head slowly lifted. A strange look came over his ravaged face, a look almost of relief.

"She said that, did she? My Polly! My brave, loving, loyal little mate! I might have known——"

The old woman, closely watching him, lied with growing confidence.

"And so, seeing they could not get her otherwise, they killed her, son; killed her clean and swift as a body would want to die, not lingering on after the heart has gone out of her, beyond her time—but fighting to the last, like any man, for the things she holds dearer than life, her home, her child, her—her love——"

Ezra burst into a terrible sobbing, and the old woman, rising with infinite difficulty, managed to hobble over to him by the aid of stools and table, and held his head against her breast. She was whispering under her breath, "God forgive me, God forgive me!"

At last he stirred, saying dully, "Her body—perhaps they will have left me that——"

"No, no," said Granny in startled haste, "not even that. You see"—she had need to think rapidly—"they—they dragged Polly down to the river, she struggling every step of the way, calling on your name, cursing them—no, no, not cursing!—what am I thinking of? That was another child of mine, her father." She passed a distracted hand over her brow. "But, anyway, 'twas there they had killed her, Ezra, because she—she wouldn't get into the canoe, you see, they could not force her away from you. Ah, a grand fight she made of it! And so they—they did the thing, and cast her body into the river. 'Tis a swift water, son. She'll be far from this by now, drifting who knows where—who knows where?"

THE man's head fell upon his breast. It did not occur to him to ask further questions, to wonder how the woman could have seen so much, bound as she was, and through a closed door.

In the silence that followed, the baby awoke and cried.

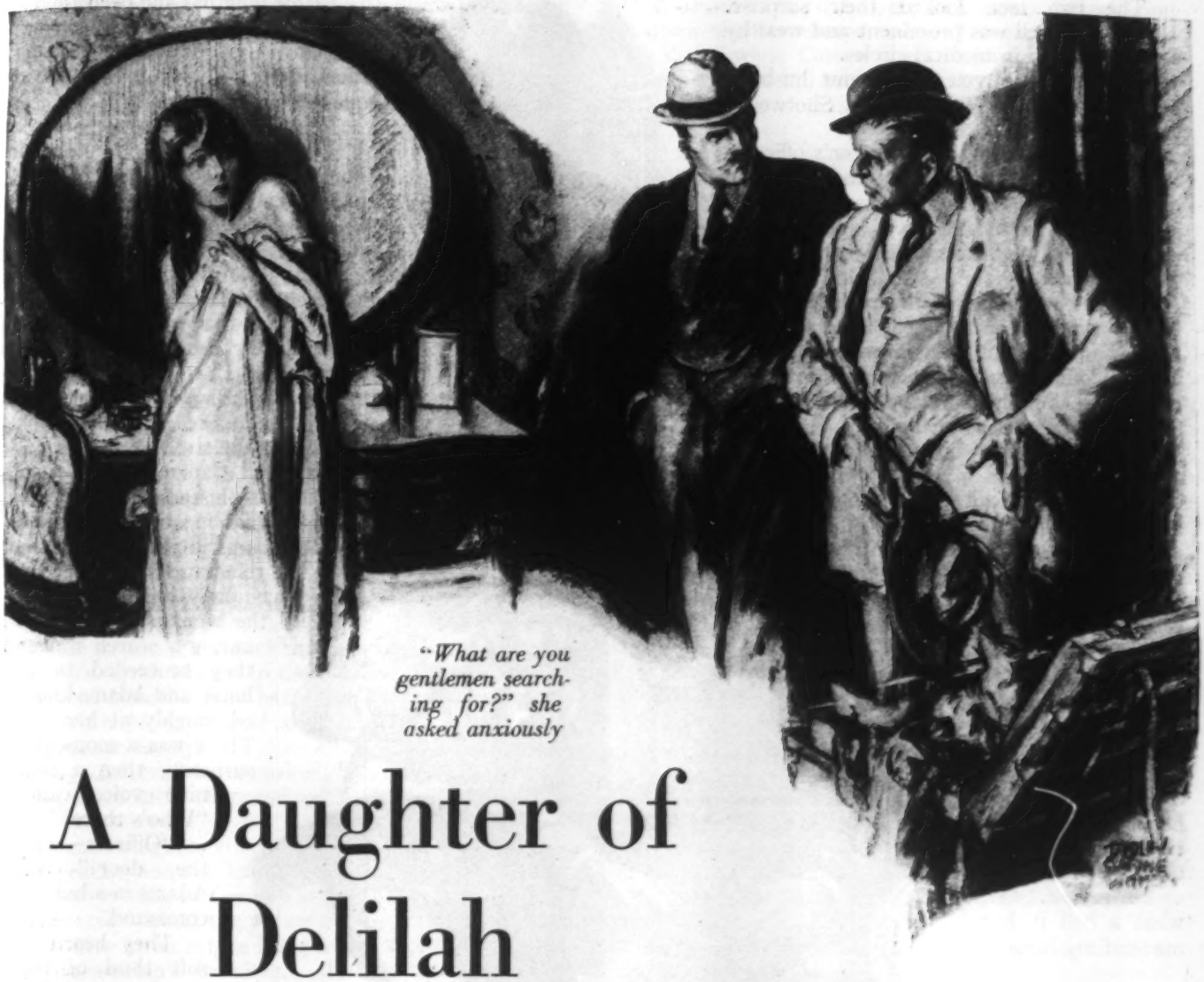
"God be praised!" gasped Granny. "He is alive then, alive! I have not dared to ask, or to look. So still he was——"

"Like his mother," said Ezra. He went to the cradle and stood gazing, his face a-quiver. Suddenly he stooped and took something out of the baby's clenched fist; a long, gray feather. "What is this?" he asked, dully.

Granny started. The Indian, then had left his sign, his warning! But she managed to answer, carelessly:

"Oh, that? Why, he must have pulled it out of his mother's feather duster, strong little man that he is! Come, Ezra, make up the fire, son. 'Tis time for the child's nursing bottle."

For Mistress Estill, builder of empire, had little energy left to waste on grief.



"What are you gentlemen searching for?" she asked anxiously

A Daughter of Delilah

The True Story of a Dramatic Raid in the War on Drug Peddlers

By Will Angus

Illustrations by Dudley G. Summers

NARCOTIC Inspector Carson and the Chief Agent, Reaves, were preparing to leave their office after a dreary day over routine reports, when there came a light knock at the door. A woman stood outside.

"This is the Narcotic Agent's office, isn't it?" she asked. "I want to speak with you a moment—if you are not in too big a hurry."

The caller was apparently in her thirties. Her features were refined, but had the haggard expression of mental or physical suffering. Her dress was neither that of affluence nor of privation, yet her manners betokened culture. She wasted no time, but launched at once into her subject.

"My name is Mrs. Edward Arnold. You may know my husband—a cotton broker here in the city."

The two men nodded. They were familiar with the broker's name, though they did not know him personally.

"My husband," continued Mrs. Arnold, while her eyes involuntarily dropped in embarrassment, "is a dope fiend."

She paused and looked from one to the other of the men as if expecting some expression, perhaps of interest or surprise, at the announcement of what, to her, was so vital a matter. She seemed disappointed at their unresponsive expression; but hers was an old, old story with them.

"I'm sorry, lady," said Reaves in a sympathetic but businesslike tone, "that we have no jurisdiction over the addicts. The law doesn't reach them—except where they are caught in possession of a narcotic illegally obtained. What we are after is the source of their illegal supply—the drug peddler and smuggler."

Mrs. Arnold leaned forward. There was a note of eagerness in her voice as she said: "That is exactly my object here. I believe the doctor who supplies him the drug gets it from an organized gang of smugglers right here in Louisville!"

Reaves and Carson glanced at each other.

"That sounds interesting, madam," Reaves said. "Let's have the details. First, who is the doctor you suspect?"

"Doctor Ernest Shotwell," was Mrs. Arnold's ready reply.

Note: This is one of a series of narratives by a former agent of the Federal narcotic squad, revealing, under an assumed name, actual incidents and adventures in the government's ceaseless fight against the growing drug menace in this country

The two men looked their surprise. Doctor Shotwell was prominent and wealthy and stood high in medical circles.

"What makes you think your husband gets his supplies from Doctor Shotwell?" asked Reaves.

"I followed him to the doctor's office in the Rozier Building one night and walked in on them just as the doctor was handing the stuff to my husband."

"Why do you think it is smuggled?" Reaves asked.

"The bottles have a foreign label on them," replied Mrs. Arnold, "and they are not stamped. And if you will watch the doctor's office any Saturday night after ten o'clock I believe you will be convinced that something crooked is in the air."

"Do you know how he gets it?" asked Reaves.

"A man they call 'Slim' brings it to him," she replied.

"Have you ever seen 'Slim'?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Arnold. "And I think you can see him for yourself if you will watch the doctor's office as I have told you. I do hope," she said, as she rose to leave, "that you will do something in the matter." There was a note of despair in her voice. "If something isn't done at once I'll go mad—or kill myself. Oh, what a hell it has made of my home!"

"Stand and watch this door," Carson ordered. "Man knocked off upstairs!"

THAT night, about ten o'clock, Carson was sitting in the lobby of his hotel when a plain-clothes officer of the city police force entered and sat down beside him. His name was Adams—a bristling, pompous fellow whom he knew slightly and disliked rather unwarrantedly.

"Well," grunted the inspector, indifferently, "what's on your mind tonight, eh, Adams?"

Adams leaned over the arm of Carson's chair and asked in a low whisper: "You wanta knock off a junk peddler tonight?"

The air of mystery which the fellow affected made Carson grin.

"Oh, I might—if you'll bring him here and hold him till I can get a company of soldiers to help me arrest him," he replied.

"It's not a 'him'—it's a woman," said Adams in an injured tone. "However," he muttered, with a shrug of the shoulders, "if you don't want 'er—that's your business, not mine. I just thought I'd tip you off."

"Well," drawled the inspector, sleepily, "won't she keep till morning? What's the rush?"

"No rush at all—none whatever. I thought it my duty to let you on, but if——"

"Where is she?" interrupted Carson.

"At the Melvin."

"How long has she been there?"

" 'Bout a week—prob'ly longer."

"Oh!" Carson mused a moment, then asked: "Will you be at headquarters in the morning?"

"Yes," replied Adams.

"Well, I'll see you about ten in the morning. Too late for a heavy job tonight," grinned the inspector as he rose and made his way to the elevator.

Next morning when Carson looked up Adams, the "dick" informed him that a woman by the name of May Burbank had been at the Melvin Hotel for a week or more; that she was a "junker;" and that, furthermore, he believed she was selling the stuff.

Although Carson, having small faith in this blustering plain-clothes man, felt that it would be a waste of time, Adams was so insistent that he reluctantly consented to accompany him on a search of the woman's room. Securing a search warrant they proceeded to the hotel, and Adams knocked roughly at her door. There was a moment of suspense; then a feminine voice called: "Who's there?"

"Officers—open the door!" said Adams in a bullying command.

They heard the soft thud of bare feet on the floor and in a moment the key turned in the lock and the door was opened a few inches. The startled face of a young woman with disheveled hair peered through the crack.

"What do you want?" she asked in a voice filled with apprehension.

"We wanta search this joint," rasped Adams, as he rudely pushed his way past the woman into the half-darkened room. Carson, with a feeling of disgust at the uncivil manner of the detective, reluctantly followed. The woman, whom their unceremonious visit had evidently aroused from sleep, stood against the wall near the door, with a spread from the bed thrown around her in lieu of a kimono.

"What are you gentlemen searching for, may I ask?" she inquired anxiously. Her look of helplessness won the narcotic inspector's sympathies. In reply to her question Adams, who already had begun to rummage through the drawers of the bureau, merely grunted:

"Whatcha reckon—ain't you a hop artist?"

The woman seemed to be stung to calmness by the coarse manners of the detective, and replied coolly:

"Help yourself—but please turn around until I can get on some clothes!"

"Go ahead—we don't wanta look at you," growled Adams from the depths of a trunk to which he had turned

his attention. Carson, boiling over with disgust at Adams, walked over to the window and gazed down at the street below while the woman made a hasty toilet.

Then he turned to watch the busy Adams, while contempt showed plainly on his face. The woman noticed the look and asked in a tone more of injured pride than of resentment:

"What, please, have I done to merit this intrusion?"

Carson did not reply at once, but stood for a moment studying the features of the woman. She was apparently not over twenty, and unusually good-looking, although the telltale marks of the confirmed addict were distinctly noticeable to his practiced eyes. Presently he asked, purposely evading her question:

"Is your name May Burbank?"

"Yes," she replied, simply.

"Are you a drug addict?"

He expected her to dissemble, but she answered candidly, although her eyes dropped under his steady gaze:

"Yes, I am sorry to say I am—but I'm under treatment for the habit."

"Who is treating you?" asked Carson.

"Doctor Walker," she replied.

"Incriminating Evidence"

THE inspector's glance wandered from the pathetic face of the woman to the bustling, officious form of the police detective who had succeeded in reducing the room to a hopeless state of confusion. Carson decided he had gone far enough.

"Say, Adams," he remarked, "you don't seem to be having much luck. Suppose we call it a day and knock off."

Adams straightened up. A baffled look crept into his face, yet he seemed loathe to relinquish the search. Without replying to Carson, he crossed over to the bed and savagely jerked the pillow away. Then he made a sudden dive at an article lying in the exposed place. It was the woman's handbag. Hastily opening it, he dumped the contents out on the bed. Among the articles that fell out were two small bottles. One was a thin, homeopathic vial about half full of white tablets. The other was a larger bottle in a red wrapper. With a grin of exultation, as if he had performed some marvelous feat of cunning, he picked up the two bottles, examined them with a careful air of importance, gave the woman an ominous stare, and, walking over to Carson, solemnly laid the "incriminating evidence" in his hand.

The inspector examined the two bottles. The small one contained about fifty one-fourth grain morphine hypodermic tablets and was labeled in strict accordance with the regulations. These he returned to the woman. The other was an eighth-ounce of morphine sulphate in cubes. It bore a German label and had no revenue stamp on it. There was no doubt as to its being smuggled goods.

Carson looked at the woman. She dropped her eyes as if unable to meet the questioning look in his own. There was no way out of it—the possession of this contraband drug was *per se* a criminal offense and she must answer to the court for it.

"I'm sorry, little woman," he said, with genuine sympathy, "but I'm afraid this means trouble for you. You'll have to get ready and go with us to the commissioner's office. Have you any money—or a friend who would go on your bond?"

She shook her head slowly. "I have a little money but—no friend—here. How much will the bond be?"

"Oh, we'll make it as light as possible," he said, a little awkwardly. "Hurry up now and we'll wait out in the hall for you."

"Wait out in the hall—and let her do a disappearing act down the fire escape, or——" began the officious "city dick," when Carson checked him with a look of sudden fierceness and led him out into the hall where they waited until the woman joined them.

At the United States commissioner's office Carson felt relieved to find nobody except the commissioner himself. He did not desire any spectators at the hearing. For some inexplicable reason he felt a peculiar sympathy for this woman who, although actually guilty of a technical violation of the law, seemed more a victim of its misdirected application than a criminal.

The proper papers were hastily executed, the woman accepting service of the warrant without the legal formality of having it served by a deputy marshal. She pleaded guilty and Adams, after submitting his evidence, was excused. The commissioner turned to the woman, whose comely face was drawn with anxiety.

"Your name is May Burbank, I believe?" he questioned.

"Yes, sir," she replied.

"How old are you?"

"Nineteen."

"Married or single?"

"Divorced," she murmured, almost inaudibly.

"Um-m," mused the commissioner, regarding her thoughtfully. "Rather young for such trials. Where is your home?"

"In Mayfield," she replied.

"What is your means of support?"

"I live with my parents."

The commissioner looked at her pointedly. "What, may I ask, are you doing in Louisville?"

The woman looked up quickly, then dropped her head. After a moment's hesitation she replied slowly:

"I am under treatment of Doctor Walker for—drug addiction."

"Where did you get the bottle of morphine that the officers found in your possession?"

The woman was silent. She glanced at Carson. "Am I forced to tell?" she faltered.

"Well," said the commissioner, "we can't make you tell. It might operate in your favor—although I hold out no inducement, understand. You may do as you please about it."

"I prefer not to tell, Your Honor," she said quietly.

"All right," said the commissioner. "How much bond can you give?"

"I—have very little money, sir," she said.

"Can you raise twenty-five dollars?" he asked.

"Yes, I guess so," she answered.

"Very well, then," said the commissioner. "That's the smallest amount I am allowed to fix in cases of this nature."

The Woman is Released

THE necessary papers were signed, the money deposited and the woman took her departure. Carson, with a mental resolve to use his influence with the judge in her behalf when the case came up for trial, made his way to the Customs Building where he found Reaves alone in his office.

"What have you got on hand for tonight?" Reaves asked.

"This is Saturday, you know," Carson reminded him. "I thought I'd take a slant in the neighborhood of the Rozier Building and see if there's anything to Mrs. Arnold's tip."

"Sure thing," said Reaves approvingly. "I was just

going to suggest that some of us should get busy on that matter."

The Rozier Building was an eight-story office structure. Doctor Shotwell's office comprised three connecting rooms on the fourth floor. A hall ran back through the center of the building on each floor and the elevator was in the front left-hand corner at the entrance, with a stairway ascending spirally around it.

Carson was familiar with the interior arrangement. He remembered that Doctor Shotwell's offices were the first on the side of and beginning at the elevator. He remembered also that the office of a close friend of his, Arthur Hammond, an architect, was across the hall directly facing Doctor Shotwell's reception room door.

That afternoon he dropped in to see Hammond, to whom he put matters frankly.

"I'm working on a tip that was handed me yesterday," he said, "and I want to see what you think about it. Have you ever seen anything irregular going on across the hall?"

Hammond meditated a moment. "Doctor Shotwell, you mean?" he asked.

Carson nodded.

Hammond's eyes wandered toward the door facing Doctor Shotwell's office.

"I guess I never would have attached any importance to it if you hadn't mentioned it in the way you did; but, come to think of it—I *have* seen some things that you might call irregular."

"What have you seen?" asked Carson.

"Well," said Hammond, with deliberation, "I don't know what you're driving at, but I recall that on two or three occasions, when I'd be up here at night, around ten o'clock, I've seen a young man—the same one each time—go in the doctor's office. There would be nothing unusual about that but for the fact that it is always on a Saturday night, and in the three years I have occupied this office I have never known Doctor Shotwell to be in his office on any other night of the week. Always the same fellow and he always carried a suit case or telescope.

"The first time I paid no attention to it. I was leaving my office about ten o'clock and as I came out this fellow was standing at the doctor's door opposite mine. As I walked over to the elevator the door opened noiselessly and the man passed in. I gave it no thought and soon forgot all about it. But since then I've seen this happen several times and I *have* wondered what it meant."

"Well, Arthur," said Carson, reflectively, "I have a hunch that you've been innocently witnessing a little dope-smuggling game."

"What!" exclaimed Hammond, sitting bolt upright and staring incredulously at Carson.

The inspector grinned. "I've got a pretty reliable tip," he said, "and that's my business here now. I want your assistance."

"Anything in my power, old man—just name it," said Hammond.

"Oh, it's not much," said Carson. "I just want to use your office tonight as an observation post, if I may."

"Go to it, old sleuth," laughed Hammond. "Help yourself. Do you want me up here or do you prefer to be alone?"

"Either way," said Carson.

"Well, I'd like to see the fun if I won't be in the way."

"You won't be in the way," Carson assured him. "I'm not going to spill anything tonight, anyway. I just want to get my glims on this fellow and spot his movements. What the doctor gets is small skimptions. I want the gang that's bringing it here."

"Good!" cried Hammond with boyish enthusiasm. He pulled a bunch of keys from his pocket and, detaching one, handed it to Carson. "That's a key to the office," he said. "I have another and something may prevent my coming. If I'm not here just make yourself at home."

One of Douglas Duer's illustrations for "A Tryst With Ghosts"—a powerful story of mystery and love in next month's McCLURE'S

That night about nine-thirty the inspector took the elevator to the third floor of the Rozier Building. He was the only passenger, and as soon as it disappeared on its return trip he slipped noiselessly up the stairs to the floor above. He stood a moment, listening. All was silent. As far as he could see down the hall every office was in darkness. The hall itself was dimly lighted by an occasional small electric bulb. Doctor Shotwell's office was in total darkness and there was no indication that any one was within.

Slipping stealthily across the floor to Hammond's door, Carson fitted the key in the lock and turned it slowly. It made no noise. He slipped inside and closed the door carefully. There was enough reflection from the street lights to see objects in the room. He placed a footstool in front of the letter slot and seated himself to wait, his eyes in line with the opening.

He had a full view of the hall for some distance up and down. As the minutes slipped by, the silence was broken only occasionally by the running of the elevator. It seldom passed his floor, usually stopping at one of the lower floors and returning.

Suddenly a shadowy form appeared at the head of the stairs and moved silently across the hall toward him. It was Hammond. Carson let him in and resumed his vigil. Ten minutes passed. During that time the elevator had not made a trip. Carson had just decided that it had stopped for the night, when suddenly he heard it start up. The next moment it stopped at the fourth floor and a man stepped out. He carried a traveling case in his hand.

Walking directly to the door of the doctor's waiting room, the man gave two light raps on the door. There was a moment's wait in which the man turned around almost facing Carson who, with eyes glued to the tiny slit in the door, carefully studied his features.

Of slight build, he appeared to be around twenty-five. He wore a light, sporty suit of clothes and a cap pulled well down on his head. His sharp, pale face bore the unmistakable stamp of a dissolute life.

While Carson was mentally card-indexing the man's features the door of the doctor's office opened noiselessly and a tall figure in shirt sleeves appeared like a shadow against the dark background. The light from the hall enabled Carson to distinguish the familiar features of Doctor Shotwell.

Not a word was spoken. The doctor stepped back to allow the man to pass inside, then softly closed the door. About fifteen minutes passed while Carson strained his ears to catch any sound that might indicate the nature of this mysterious business, but the doctor's office might have been a tomb so far as any audible manifestation of life inside was concerned. If they were conversing, it was being done in the most carefully-guarded whispers.

An Unexpected Assault

PRESENTLY the door opened and the man emerged. He had reached the head of the stairway when the doctor, who had remained at the door with his eyes following the retreating figure of the stranger, gave a slight hiss with his tongue. The man paused and looked back. The doctor jerked his head and the stranger returned to the door. There were a few whispered words, the doctor appearing to argue some point while the stranger seemed to protest with vigorous shakes of the head. The man soon turned abruptly on his heel and with an ugly scowl disappeared down the stairs. The doctor, in shirt sleeves, collarless and very red in the face, followed him to the landing and shook his fist at the space below. Impetuosity evidently got the better of caution, for he exclaimed savagely:

"I'll quit you—you infernal gouger!"

There was no response. The doctor, shaking with rage, called louder than before:

"I'll turn you up, confound you—d'ye hear? *I'll—turn—you—up!*"

For a moment he remained glaring down into the semi-darkness of the air shaft; then, as the object of his wrath apparently had continued unheedingly on his way down, he turned and made his way slowly toward the half-open door of his office. He was a man of perhaps sixty, tall, angular and gray. In his normal state he had rather a distinguished bearing, in contrast to which his present violent appearance was strikingly incongruous. Still shaking from his recent outburst of rage, he had just reached his door when there was a sudden rush from behind, the dull, sickening thud of a blackjack, and the doctor's senseless body sank limply across the threshold of his own office, while a shadowy form in light clothes flitted toward the stairway and disappeared.

It all transpired so quickly that Carson, with eyes pressed close to the letter slot watching every detail of the tragedy, was momentarily bereft of his usual swift action in emergencies. However, the aberration was only momentary. Reaction came swiftly and almost before the doctor's form had relaxed the inspector was by his side. A hurried examination satisfied him that life still existed in the senseless body, and, instructing Hammond to telephone for the police and a surgeon, he darted down the stairs. Reaching the ground floor, he glanced hurriedly around the entrance, and, seeing no one, hastened out on the street. A few stragglers sauntered here and there along the block and across the street stood a policeman. Carson called him across and when he had made himself known asked:

"Have you been in this vicinity for the past ten minutes?"

"Yes," replied the officer.

"Seen any one come out of this building?"

"No."

"Then stand here and watch this door," Carson ordered. "Man knocked off upstairs—headquarters phoned. I'm going back up."

Leaving the bewildered patrolman, Carson shot back up the stairs to find that Hammond had finished telephoning.

While they discussed the unexpected tragedy, the tread of hurrying feet sounded on the stairs. In a moment two police officers and a surgeon from headquarters arrived. When the physician had been given first aid an ambulance was called and he was hurried to the hospital.

After giving the police all the particulars in the matter, Carson took a look around the office. Passing through the middle room, he entered the operating room beyond. The door had been left open and the first thing that greeted the inspector's eyes on entering was a half-opened package lying on a small table in a corner of the room. Examination of the contents revealed fifty one-eighth ounce bottles of morphine sulphate. They all had German labels and were unstamped. The package undoubtedly had been delivered by the man with the telescope case. The doctor evidently had left the package on the table to accompany his night visitor to the door, intending to conceal it on his return. A bunch of keys hung from the door of a cabinet against the wall. Carson pulled the door open and found inside three bottles identical with the ones in the package. This was evidently the doctor's depository for his contraband stuff—a very unsafe place, in Carson's opinion.

The inspector called the two police officers and showed them his discovery. Cautioning them to keep the drug feature of the case absolutely quiet until the proper time, he took possession of the package of dope, locked the doors of the office, and, giving the officers a key, retained one himself. They then left the building.

Carson first went to the chief's office to place the package of contraband in the vault, and then proceeded to his hotel.

The next day at breakfast he read the newspaper accounts of the tragedy. The assault on Doctor Shotwell was given a conspicuous place on the front page, but was very brief. Carson was relieved to find that no mention was made of the dope found in his office.

Carson Again Meets the Woman

THRUSTING the paper in his pocket, the inspector went out for a Sunday morning stroll, sauntering down toward the river until he reached Baxter Square. The shade looked inviting and he took a seat on one of the benches. He had been there probably ten minutes when a young woman seated herself on a bench directly across the walk from him. It was May Burbank. She recognized him at once and the next instant had crossed the walk that separated them.

"Good morning, Mr. Carson," she said pleasantly. "Do you object to my sharing your bench?"

"Certainly not," replied Carson, politely, as he made room for her. He wondered what was coming.

She toyed nervously with her handkerchief for a moment, then said earnestly:

"I wasn't expecting to find you here, but I was going to look you up today, anyway."

Carson looked at her keenly. This woman had puzzled him from the start. She was not one of the ordinary run of migratory addicts. She was not a criminal, though the law, which sometimes ignores extenuating circumstances, had forced him to arrest her the day before on a criminal charge. She was not——

His speculations were short-lived for she began imme-

diately to enlighten him as to why she wished to see him.

"First," she said, "I want to thank you for your consideration yesterday."

Carson waved his hand in protest. "Don't mention it, lady," he said. "I'm sorry that circumstances forced me to take you in custody. I will do what I can to make your case as light as possible."

"Don't let that cause you any worry," she hastened to assure him. "You were only doing your duty and I hold no malice toward you. On the contrary, I believe it is going to prove a fortunate circumstance for both of us."

Carson looked perplexed. "In what way?" he asked.

"I'm going to tell you where I got that bottle of morphine; and when I do it will lead you to a gang of dope smugglers—which should be good news for you; and"—a gleam of fire shot from her dark eyes—"*if you get Slim Jackson in the raid it will be a source of great joy to me!*"

At the mention of the name "Slim," Carson sat up with a start. "Slim" was the man Mrs. Arnold had named.

"Who is 'Slim' Jackson?" he asked quickly.

"He is my divorced husband," the woman answered mildly. Then she continued in an unemotional voice:

"I met Harry Jackson two years ago at Chattanooga. I was seventeen and had gone there to take a job in a stationery store. I was reared in a country village and never was in a city before. I met him one night at a skating rink down on the river shore. It was a case of love—or *delusion*, I later found it to be—at first sight. We were married two weeks later. He appeared always to have plenty of money, but I was never able to learn how he made it. I was really so happy in the first glamour of our honeymoon that it never occurred to me to inquire. We lived at the best hotel in the city. Harry would run in for a day or two; then he would be gone for a week or more.

"This continued for about six months. I began to tire of hotel life and wanted a home. He laughed the idea to scorn, telling me that a home was something he never had and in fact couldn't use in his business. 'Ain't you farin' like a queen?' he would say. 'Why, most girls would think they were in Paradise if they had it fine and easy like you?' That is all the satisfaction I ever got.

"One night I was taken ill. He came in the next night and found me delirious. The doctor called it dengue fever. I was in bed nearly three weeks and Harry stayed with me, although at times I could see that he was restless and wanted to be off.

A "Headache Cure"

"AFTER I got up my health continued wretched. I suffered with intense headaches nearly all the time. One night when I had an unusually severe attack Harry injected something in my arm that relieved me. The next day when my head started aching again he repeated it and I was soon relieved. This continued until he started to leave on one of his trips. He gave me a hypodermic syringe and some little white tablets and showed me how to use them. I never suspected or asked what the tablets were. They relieved my headaches and that was all I cared to know.

"Shortly afterward my fifteen-year-old sister, Alice, came to visit me. She had been with me about a month when one day Harry came in from an unusually long trip. He looked seedy and despondent. I asked him what was the matter. He mumbled something about being 'broke and up against it,' but would never tell me anything about his affairs. He stayed around the room as if afraid to go out and would start at every knock on the door or ring of the telephone.

"I had used up all my tablets and asked him for some more. I had begun to depend on them. I still had no idea what they were. I knew nothing about dope.

"He told me very crossly that he didn't have any—even for himself.

" 'For yourself!' I said in surprise. 'Why—what do you use them for?'

"He laughed sarcastically and said he guessed I would find out for myself pretty soon.

"I did find out. Without them I was miserable and every passing day increased my suffering. I asked him if he couldn't buy me some at the drug store.

" 'Buy 'em! At a drug store!' he roared. 'Like hell you can buy 'em!'

" 'Then where do you get them?' I asked. 'What are they?'

" 'Hop,' he answered curtly.

" 'Hop—what's that?' I asked.

" 'Dope—morphine!' he snarled impatiently, and left the room.

The Disappearance of Alice

"I SAID no more, but that night my head was nearly killing me and I felt that I couldn't stand it any longer. Harry was out and I called the house physician. After a little questioning, during which I told him about the hypodermics, he said:

" 'My poor woman, do you realize that you have the morphine habit—that you are a confirmed addict?'

"When I understood at last what it meant I nearly lost my mind. The doctor gave me a shot and left me two tablets—which I hid for fear that Harry might find and use them. The doctor told me I would have to take a treatment that would cost about two hundred dollars.

"When Harry got home I told him what the doctor had said. He went into a rage. 'Treatment!' he snarled. 'Two hundred dollars! Why, you poor simp, I haven't got two hundred *cents!* An' what's more—if things don't look up quick we'll have to get out o' this joint!' He jumped up and paced the room. 'Treatment!' he snarled again. 'Two hundred dollars! Why, what you reckon *I'm* doin' without a treatment? I'm sufferin' hell, that's what, an' I ain't takin' any treatment. First place, I ain't got the jack, and second place—I don't want any infernal treatment!'

"He showed his true nature from then on. I began to loathe him and wish him out of my sight. And then came the horrible blow that broke my heart."

Here the woman paused to control her emotion. Tears started to her eyes, but with a strong effort she resumed:

"One night, shortly after that, Harry seemed in a better humor than usual. I think he must have gotten hold of some dope. As for me, out of pure kindness of heart, the house physician had supplied me with enough to keep body and soul together. Alice was going home next day. I had written father and he had sent the railroad fare.

"About eight o'clock that evening Harry said to Alice: 'Well, little sis, this is your last night with us. Don't you wanta see the movies?' Child-like, she consented eagerly.

" 'Why, Harry,' I said, 'where will you get the money?'

" 'Oh,' he replied, jingling some coins or something in his pocket, 'I guess I can raise the price of two movie tickets, and'—he gave me a look that I couldn't fathom—'I think my ship'll come in tomorrow!'

"With a feeling, somehow, that there was something wrong, I watched them disappear out of the door. That was the last I have ever seen of Alice."

She paused and appeared about to give way to her emotions, but presently murmured in a low voice that vibrated with anguish:

"He carried her to a white slave trafficker!"

After a long silence she continued:

"About ten o'clock next morning the telephone rang. Wild with apprehension, I answered it. It was Harry. 'I'm sorry, May,' he said, 'but I had to cash in on Alice last night. It was that or the Pen. Guess you'd better wire your dad to come get you. I'm sellin' out——'

"That was all I heard. When I came to I was in bed, and the house physician was bending over me.

"My father was wired for and he came next day. He stayed in Chattanooga a week looking for Alice and Harry. If he had found him he would have killed him.

"We have never heard from Alice since. I came here about two weeks ago for treatment under Doctor Walker. He began reducing the amount so quickly that I thought I would never be able to stand it, so I got the bottle of morphine that you found in my handbag to have on hand in case of an emergency. But, thank heaven, I didn't have to use it, and in two weeks more I will be off the stuff. I got the bottle of morphine from Doctor Shotwell."

Carson looked at her in quick surprise. "What do you know about Doctor Shotwell?" he asked.

"Nothing," May replied, "beyond the fact that he sells dope and I know where he gets it."

"That's plenty," said Carson. "Did you buy this bottle from him in person?"

"Yes. He charged me fifteen dollars for it. He just asked a few questions, put my name down on a record, and told me I could get more if I needed it."

"What were you going to tell me about 'Slim' and a gang of smugglers? What has Doctor Shotwell got to do with smugglers?" questioned Carson after a pause.

"He gets his supplies from the gang," she replied, "and Slim Jackson is their leader."

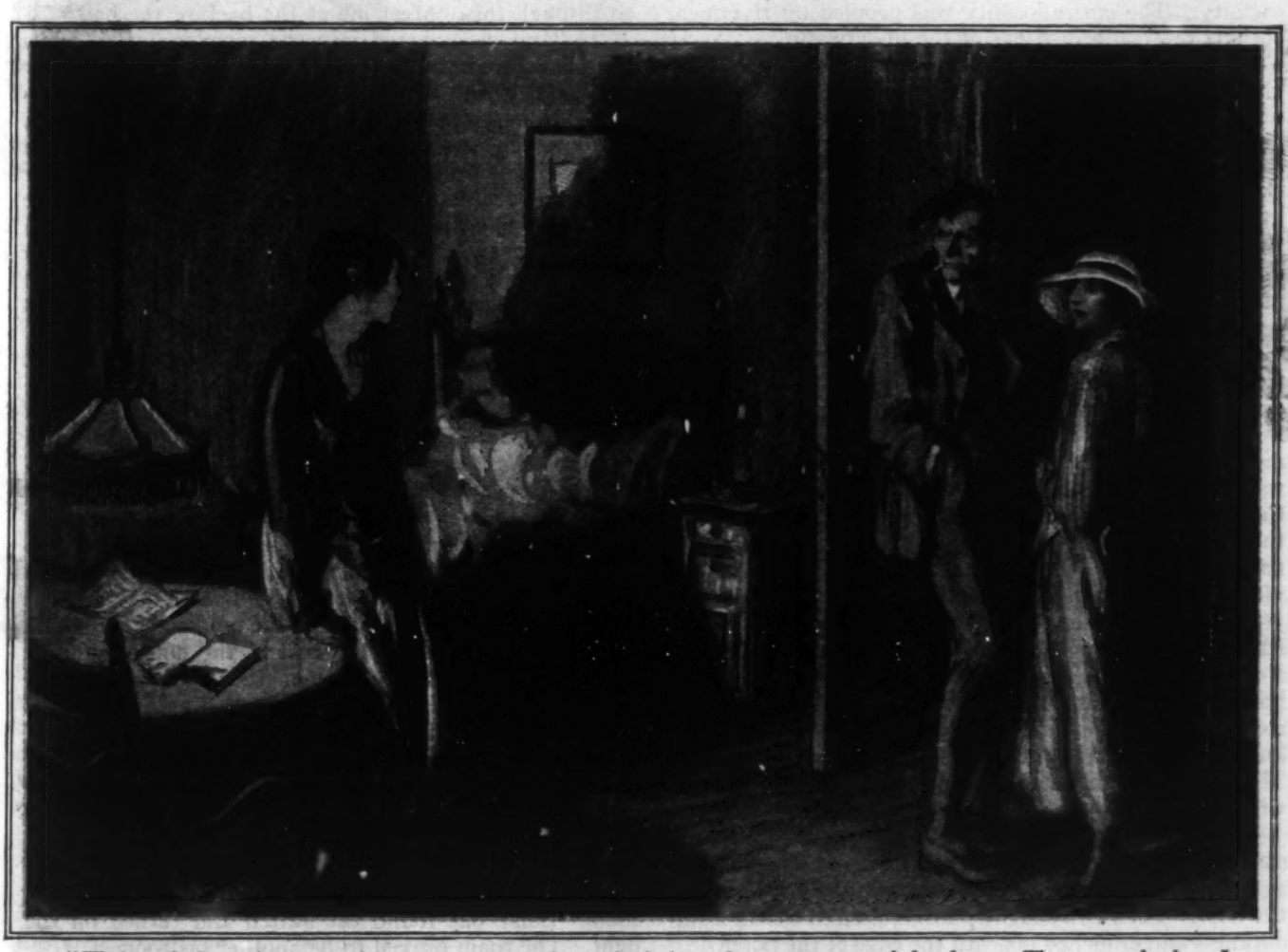
"How do you know that?" asked Carson.

"Last night about nine o'clock, I was sitting in my room at the hotel when there came a knock at the door. When I opened it—I almost fainted. Harry Jackson stood before me!

"I started to scream for help, but he whispered quickly for me to be quiet and listen to him—he had some news for me. Almost overcome with fright and astonishment, I sank into a chair and he began talking very fast. He said he had seen me on the street, 'tailed' me to the hotel and found I was rooming there. He said he was now 'in clover'—making plenty of money and that he knew where Alice was and if I would go back to him he would get her and bring her to me.

"God must have come to my aid in that trying moment. I became perfectly calm and self-contained. I even pretended to be glad to see him and expressed my willingness to take him back. I made the stipulation, however, that he must first prove his good faith by taking me to Alice. He promised to do this. Before he left I had worked into his confidence to such an extent that he told me what he was doing and all about himself."

May opened her handbag and took from it a folded strip of paper, which she handed to the inspector, who



"With a feeling that something was wrong, I watched them disappear out of the door. That was the last I have ever seen of Alice"

opened it and read: "Peterson. 36 Perry Avenue."

"That is the address he gave me," she said. "I am to go there tonight at eleven o'clock, when he promises to have Alice there. Harry and three confederates live and carry on their business in this house. He goes by the name of Peterson at present.

"Now," she went on in a cool, calculating manner, "if you will have your men on hand to raid this house on Perry Avenue after I leave with Alice—if she is there—you will be sure to get Slim and probably the others. But I hope you get him, even if you lose the rest. You will find dope enough there to get him a long term and, besides, if you will investigate Doctor Shotwell you will get some more evidence."

Carson looked at her queerly. "Haven't you read the morning paper?" he asked.

"No," May replied. "Why?"

He pulled the paper out of his pocket and showed her the article describing the assault on Doctor Shotwell. May read it with considerable interest and surprise.

When they separated Carson went immediately to the office and twenty minutes later the chief agent and six inspectors were grouped around him while he carefully outlined his plans. When the consultation ended, an hour later, every man knew his part.

Perry Avenue is nothing more than a straggling lane that runs through a block of squalid tenement houses in the extreme northwestern part of the city. Number 36 was the last house on the street and only a few steps from an old abandoned wharf, the lower end of which had fallen in from decay. The house, a dilapidated two-story building, was in keeping with its neighbors in that vicinity. The entire locality was peopled by rivermen, "wharf rats" and denizens of the underworld.

It was two o'clock when the narcotic officers left the chief agent's office. Around five that afternoon seven men, whose outward appearance could not be distinguished from the general run of Sunday loafers and pedestrians in the neighborhood of Perry Avenue, loitered singly and at sufficient intervals apart to disarm suspicion, by the house bearing the number 36. While they apparently were indifferent to their surroundings, yet when they assembled that night every man had at his fingertips the minutest details of the external setting of the premises.

At a quarter of eleven, four men stole like shadows from the street at the rear to the back of Number 36 and secreted themselves at points of vantage. At the front two men stood in the darkness just within the mouth of an alley a few paces above the house, another watched from the shadow of an old wall just below, while Carson ensconced himself in the gloom of a small shed that protruded from the side of a tiny shop across the narrow street. There were no street lights and the vicinity was wrapped in darkness.

Presently Carson heard a clock in a near-by house strike eleven. The sound had scarcely died away when a taxicab drew quietly up and stopped in front of the house they were watching. A woman got out, walked confidently up the three or four steps of the porch and knocked lightly on the door. She was instantly admitted. There was no light in the hall and Carson could not see who opened it.

The moment the door closed behind the woman Carson glided silently across the street and flattened himself against the wall immediately on the right-hand side of the door. Then two shadowy forms filtered through the darkness and crouched beneath the edge of the porch.

The officers had scarcely settled themselves in their places when the door opened and the woman, who of course was May Burbank, emerged. With her was another woman of slightly smaller stature, whom Carson rightly surmised was her sister. A man in shirt sleeves and stockinged feet followed them out and stood motionless at the edge of the porch until the women had entered the taxicab and driven off. Then he turned to reënter the house.

Before he could even gasp his astonishment the muzzle of a forty-five automatic was pressed hard against his ribs and the tense, low voice of Carson muttered: "*Up with 'em, bo—and no noise!*" In another instant the two inspectors who were hiding on the ground below the porch snapped handcuffs on him.

"Inside!" whispered Carson. Threatening their prisoner with instant death if he made a sound, they slipped inside and closed the door. Carson produced a flashlight and saw that they were in a narrow, short hallway with a door opening on each side and one at the end.

"You stay here in the hall with this fellow, Fisher," said Carson to one of the inspectors, "while Holland and I go through the house. If he makes a break—croak him!"

Fisher nodded. Carson threw his light on the man and peered at him. There was no mistake—it was Slim. He then stepped to the door on the right, opened it and threw his light quickly around. It appeared to be a bedroom and was unoccupied. At the farther side, on the left, was a door—probably leading into an adjoining room. Stepping back into the hall, he examined the room opposite. Another bedroom with a door, exactly like the first.

He turned to Inspector Holland. "Go through that room," he said, pointing to the one on the left, "and I'll go through this. Meet me at the back of the hall."

Holland disappeared into the room indicated while Carson entered the one on the right. Passing swiftly through it to the door beyond, he turned the knob. Entering, he flashed his light around. The room was empty. Windows on two sides indicated there was no room beyond. The house was square and evidently had four rooms on each floor. A door on the left opened into the back hall. Just as he reached it a shot rang out, then two more in quick succession. He jerked the door open just in time to see two men rush out of the door opposite and dart up the stairs. Instantly his gun was focused on them.

"Halt!" he shouted. Each man had a gun in his hand, but their thoughts evidently were bent on escape. The foremost man had reached the top of the steps when Carson pulled. He stopped, reeled and slumped down on the steps. He was only "winged," for Carson had shot merely to stop him. The other fellow turned sharply and fired pointblank at Carson. The bullet hit the door frame—two inches above the inspector's head.

Then there was a sudden roar that sounded in that small enclosure like the broadside of a battleship, and the fellow crumpled up and rolled to the bottom of the stairs. Reaves and his men at the rear of the house had just succeeded in crashing through the back door—and, seeing the man shoot at Carson, opened up on him.

Carson's first thought was for Holland. He rushed into the room from which the two men had emerged, and found him sitting on the floor with his hand to his head, looking sick and dazed. A hasty examination showed a deep groove across the top of his head where a bullet had plowed its way.

The other officers had now begun to gather in the room. Some one found the switch and turned on the light. The room proved to be another bedroom.

Nothing was found on the lower floor. Reaves and Carson went upstairs. There were four rooms, three of

A man in shirt sleeves followed the two women out of the house and stood motionless until they had driven off

which were empty. When they entered the rear room on the left, however, they found signs of occupancy. An old rug covered the floor and two or three chairs sat around in the room. Cigarette stumps lay in profusion everywhere. Over in one corner was a small table on which were several magazines and a greasy deck of cards. When Carson reached it, however, he picked up a package of red morphine labels identical with those on the bottles found in Doctor Shotwell's office and on the one May Burbank had. These fellows evidently got their stuff in bulk and bottled it themselves.

They were now confident that they were on the right trail. The search was continued with increased interest. For a half hour the trained sleuths examined every likely place for a secret spring or trap, without success. Carson started upstairs for a last look, but suddenly stopped short, and began to examine the panel-post at the foot of the stair railing.

It was an ordinary square post, the top of which was finished in a sphere about four inches in diameter and had the appearance of being turned from the solid post. It took only a moment's examination to discover that a couple of turns to the left detached it from the post. When Carson lifted it off, a small cavity appeared in the top. A small metal ring protruded from the bottom of the hollow formation. Giving the ring a pull, he heard a slight scraping noise back of the stairway.

The stairs ascended from the left side of the hall and the staircase was ceiled to the floor, enclosing the space underneath. When Carson arrived at the back of the stairs he found that a door, formed out of the ceiling and indistinguishable from the solid wall when closed, had swung in, disclosing a flight of steps leading downward. Descending these steps, the officers found themselves in a basement room.

Turning on the light, they discovered a flour barrel half full of morphine in large cubes standing near a small pine table in the middle of the room. On the table were a pair of prescription scales, a spatula, paste jar, and hundreds of labels identical with the ones found upstairs. At the farther end of the room were several cases of empty bottles of one-eighth and one-ounce capacity, together with a half-dozen bags of corks to fit them.

The raid was a complete success.

Results of the Raid

BY the time Carson reached his rooms the gray light of dawn was beginning to illumine the eastern horizon. He slept until past noon. Then he rose and made his way down to police headquarters. The first news that greeted him on his arrival there was that Doctor Shotwell had died during the night. This, of course, placed a charge of murder against "Slim" Jackson.

As the murder charge took precedence over his other offenses, Slim was turned over to the State for prosecution. At his trial he received a life sentence. His two confederates received terms of five years each from the Federal court. It developed at their trial that this gang had been operating in Louisville for six months.

May Burbank completed her treatment under Doctor Walker and returned to her home, taking her unfortunate sister, Alice, with her. At Carson's request her case never was called for trial.

Another of Maitland's Egyptian Adventures

The Pool of the

TO the man who catches the eight-thirty train every morning and spends the day in his office in the city, the mere mention of such a thing as Black Magic is a cause for contemptuous laughter. To him Voodooism, devil worship and sorcery in all its forms are the figments of a diseased brain—the fictitious remnants of medieval superstitions. If there is anything in them at all, he will say, it can be accounted for by hypnotism: beyond that there is nothing but the foolish imagination of illiterate people.

It is as well that the man who catches the eight-thirty should think thus. Such things have nothing to do with Bulls and Bears: such things have no market value on the Stock Exchange. And yet, surely to even the most prosaic of train catchers, motoring maybe over Salisbury Plain, there must come some faint stirring of imagination as he sees the vast dead monument of Stonehenge. Can he not see that ancient temple peopled with vast crowds of fierce savages waiting in silence for the first rays of the rising sun to touch the altar, and bathe the victims in golden light for the last time? And then the wild-eyed priests, the human sacrifice, the propitiation of strange gods.

Thus it was in England two thousand years ago: thus it is today in places beyond the ken of England's train catchers. Stamped out wherever possible, retreating always before advancing civilization, there are still men who practice strange and dreadful rites in secret places.

Moreover, it is not good for a white man to dabble in those ceremonies. For they are utterly foul and evil—with a foulness far beyond mere crime. They are without every law, moral and social—and those who have

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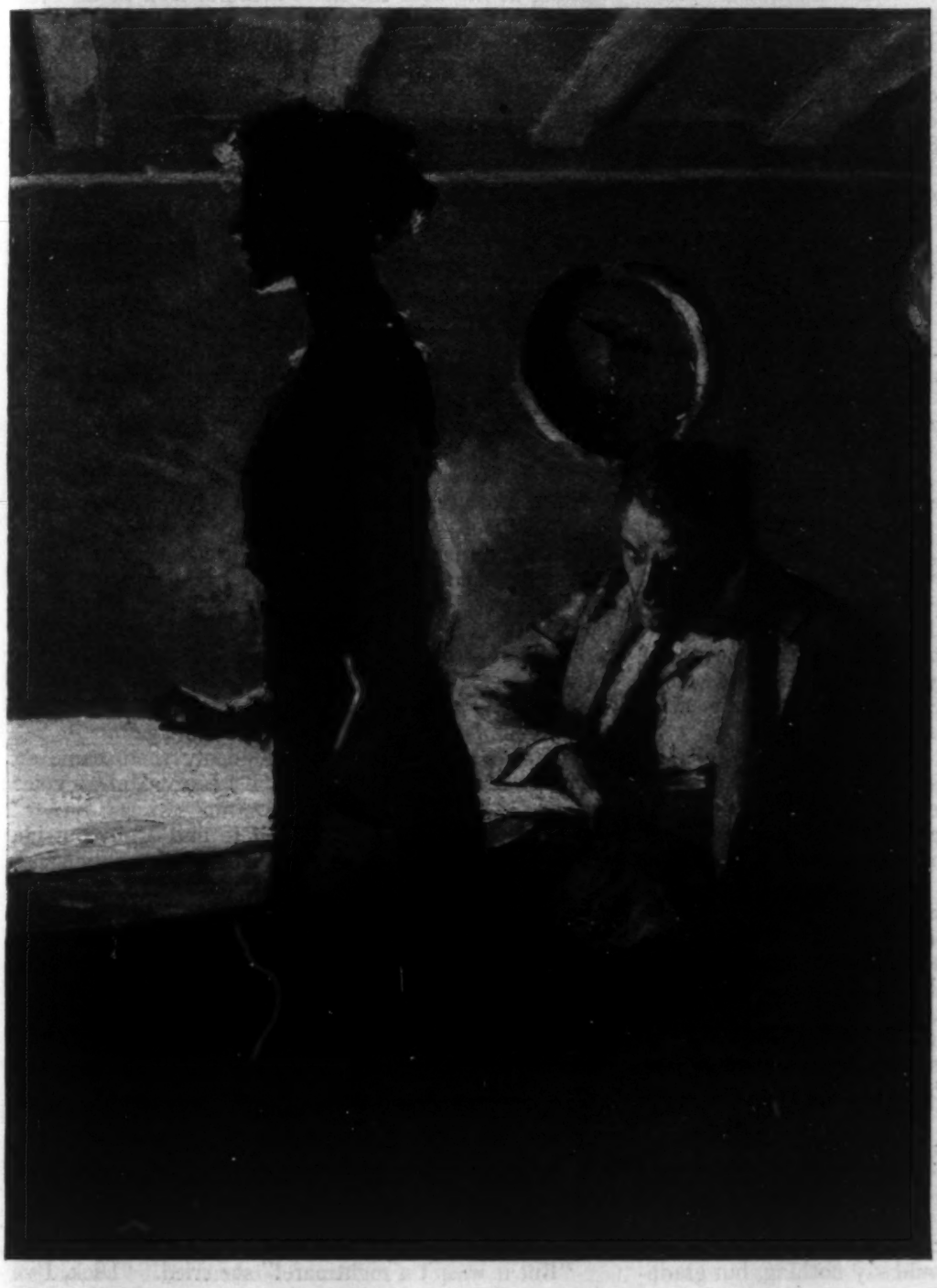
Sacred Crocodile

By H. C. McNeile

Illustrations by George W. Gage



Hazily, through the fumes of dope, I saw the three menacing figures, staring at my adored girl

dealings with them must pay a terrible price, even as Professor John Gainsford paid—Gainsford, the celebrated Egyptologist.

Most people have forgotten his name by now, though at the time the case aroused great interest. It may be remembered that, as the result of information given to them, the authorities raided a certain house on the right bank of the Nile about halfway between Cairo and Luxor. They found it deserted, but possessed of one very strange feature. In the center of the house was a large pool, filled with slimy, stagnant water. And when they had drained the water away they made a very sinister discovery. On the bottom of the pool, partially hidden in the filthy ooze, was a pair of spectacles. And the spectacles were identified as belonging to Professor Gainsford.

No other trace of that eminent savant was ever found and finally his death was taken for granted. It was known that he had left Cairo in a dahabeah going south, with his niece and a friend. It was understood that one night he had landed close to this particular house, and from that moment had never been seen again. It was further given out that in view of his notorious absent-mindedness, his niece and her friend had felt no uneasiness at his absence and had finally returned to Cairo, thinking it more than likely the professor had gone back by train.

As I say, so much was known, and though strange rumors got about they seemed too absurd to pay any attention to. And the final conclusion was that the unfortunate gentleman had probably slipped into the pool and been drowned; and that, later on, his body had been discovered by some natives and been buried.

I let it rest at that—for I was the friend. I talked it over with Jim and with Molly Tremayne, his niece, and rightly or wrongly we made our decision. Be that as it may, I will put down now for the first time the real truth of what happened on that ghastly night. For Molly Tremayne is now Molly Leyton.

PROFESSOR GAINSFORD was the last man whom one would have considered capable of evil. His mutton-chop whiskers alone gave him an air of paternal benevolence, which was enhanced by the mild blue eyes continually blinking behind his spectacles. At Sheppard's Hotel he was a familiar figure, with his coat tails flapping behind him whenever he moved, and a silk handkerchief hanging out of his pocket. It was through retrieving that pocket handkerchief four times in half an hour that I first made his acquaintance—and incidentally Molly's.

It was one night at dinner that the professor first mentioned the subject. He had omitted to put on his tie,

I remember, before coming down into the lounge, and Molly had driven him upstairs again to remedy the defect. I was dining at their table—it was not an unusual occurrence—and we started to pull his leg about it. As a general rule he used to take our chaffing in the mildest way, blinking amiably at us from behind his spectacles and promising to forget something more vital on the next occasion. And Molly was—and is—the most utterly adorable being in the world. At the moment she is leaning over my shoulder, so all married men will understand that last remark.

ON this particular night, however, the professor seemed strangely preoccupied. He sat in almost complete silence all through dinner, but he kept shooting little birdlike glances at Molly, and was, in fact, so unlike his usual self that once or twice we looked at one another in surprise.

It was toward the end of the meal that we found out the reason of his peculiar manner.

"I have had an almost unbelievable stroke of luck this afternoon," he remarked suddenly. "If it should prove to be true there is no telling to what it may lead."

"Discovered a new beetle, Uncle John?" asked Molly, with a smile.

"I have discovered," he answered solemnly, "that a secret cult, thought by every Egyptologist to have become extinct centuries ago, is still in existence. If it should prove to be the case, if this cult which as far as we know came into being about the eighteenth dynasty still lives and has carried on intact from generation to generation the hidden secrets of the ages, then I shall have made a discovery of staggering magnitude."

"But how did you find out about it, uncle?" said Molly.

"By sheer accident," he remarked. "I was in the bazaar this afternoon haggling with that arch-robber Yussuf over a scarab for which he wanted to charge me too much, when a native who was evidently not a Cairene strode into the shop. Being engrossed in the scarab, I paid no attention to him until suddenly I happened to glance up. And I saw him make a sign to Yussuf which instantly made me forget everything else. I could hardly believe my eyes, for the sign to Yussuf was the secret sign of the highest adepts of this almost-forgotten cult. Beyond possibility of doubt the sign made was the sign of the cult, and a glance at Yussuf confirmed my opinion that I was in the presence of an adept. He was cringing—positively cringing, and my excitement became intense."

"And what did you do then, Uncle John?" asked Molly.

"I waited until he left Yussuf's shop, and then I followed him. At first he would say nothing, but gradually, as he realized that I was not merely a curious tourist, but one who knew as much if not more than he did about the history of his sect, he grew more communicative."

The professor's hands were shaking with excitement.

"There seems not the slightest doubt," he continued, "that there has been no break whatever in the priesthood for over three thousand years, though repeated efforts have been made to stamp it out."

"Why is that, professor?" I asked.

He stared at me in silence for a moment or two.

"The orthodox has always persecuted the unorthodox," he said at length. "It is the one enduring and constant trait in all religions. It is—— What is it, child? What are you looking at?"

I swung around quickly. Molly was staring into the darkness beyond the tables with frightened eyes, and I half rose in my chair.

"What is it, Molly?" I asked.

"A man," she said, "a horrible-looking native was glaring at me with the most dreadful look in his eyes. He's gone now, but he looked awful."

"I'll see about it!" I cried, getting up. But the professor waved me back.

"Tut, tut!" he said irritably. "What chance have you of finding a native out there? And even if you did, he hasn't done anything."

But it seemed to me that there was nervous apprehension in the glance he threw at his niece. After a while the color came back to her face and she smiled.

"Sorry to be so stupid," she said, "but it gave me quite a turn. He looked so malignant. Go on, Uncle John, tell us about your cult."

I'm afraid I didn't pay much attention to what he said. I was too occupied in watching Molly. For I was fully determined that if she saw the man again, I would go after him at once, whatever the professor said. But nothing happened and a little later we rose and went into the lounge.

There was a small dance in the hotel that evening and when the professor had retired to his room Molly and I took the floor.

"I can't tell you what that man's face was like, Dick," she said. "His eyes seemed to bore right into my brain, and I felt as if he was dragging me toward him."

I soothed her fears, and after a while she forgot him. So did I, together with the professor's new cult and most other things. Have I not said that Molly was and is the most utterly adorable being in the world? It was not until much later that I remembered him again.

I had gone to bed, when suddenly there came an agitated knocking on my door and I heard Molly's voice calling, "Dick! Dick!"

In an instant I had opened it to find Molly outside in a pitiful condition of fright. She was trembling all over, and before I knew what had happened she was in my arms.

"What is it, darling?" I cried. "What has frightened you?"

"That man—that awful native!" she gasped. "He's in the hotel. Oh, Dick—I'm terrified! I'd just got into bed, when something made me get up and go to the door. I simply had to, though I felt as if my legs weren't my own. I opened it, and standing in the passage just outside was the man. I can't tell you the look in his eyes." She shuddered violently. "It was dreadful—horrible! He seemed to be gloating over me, and then all of a sudden he seemed to vanish."

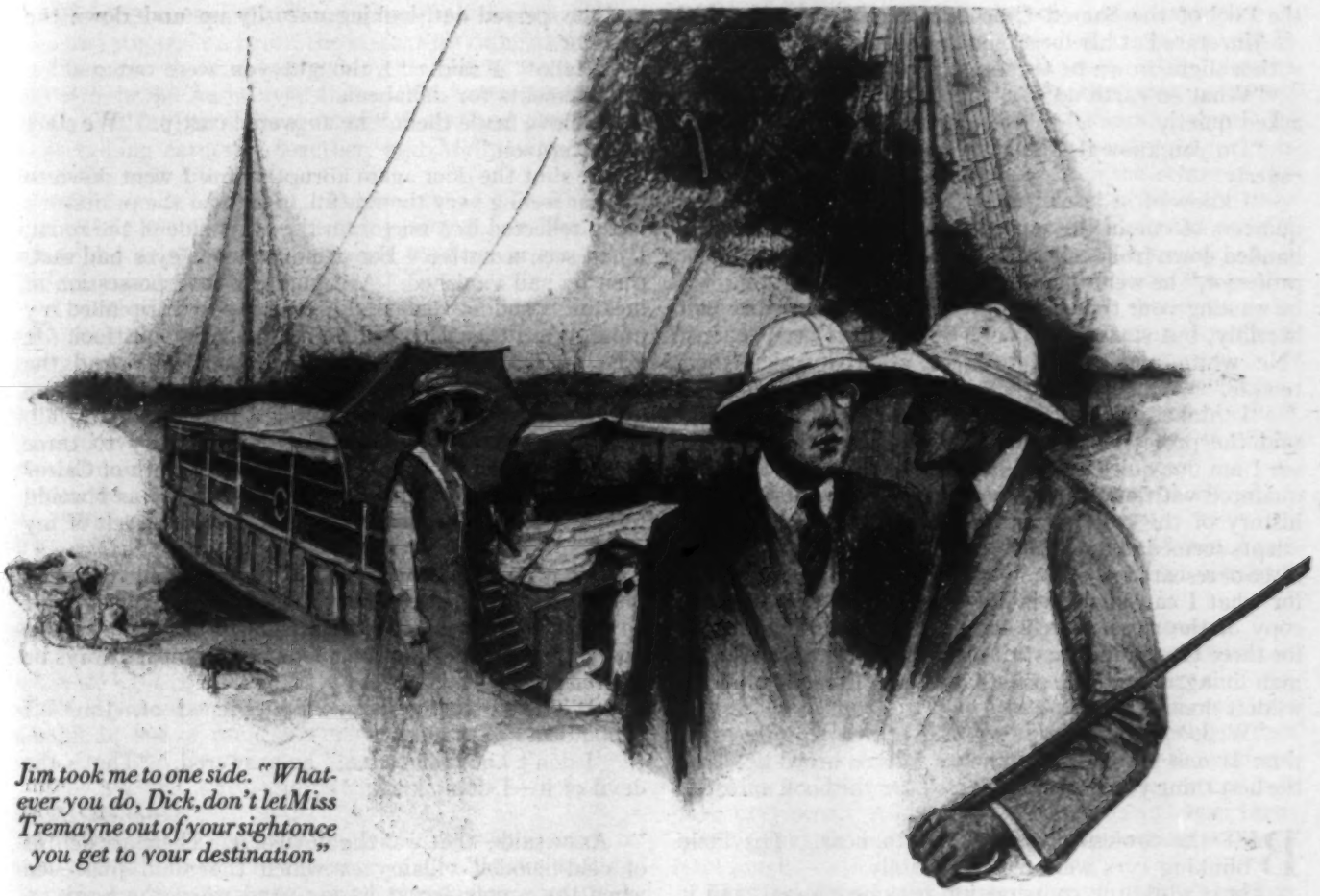
"Vanish!" I said. "My darling—you've been dreaming. You've had a nightmare."

"But it wasn't a nightmare!" she cried. "Dick, I've come straight from my door to your room. I tell you he was standing there in the passage."

I SOOTHED her as best I could, and then I had to be firm. I admit that, personally speaking, nothing would have pleased me better than to stand there with her in my arms for two or three hours. But this world is a censorious place, and the hour was well past midnight. So very gently I insisted that she must either go back to her room, or else spend the night with some woman friend in the hotel. She finally decided to do the latter.

As luck would have it, the room of a little widow who was a pal of hers was almost opposite mine. And Molly went to her, having first driven every coherent thought out of my mind by kissing me.

"When men call me darling," she murmured, "I



Jim took me to one side. "Whatever you do, Dick, don't let Miss Tremayne out of your sight once you get to your destination"

always kiss them." She was smiling up at me adorably.

"How many men?" I began furiously.

And then the widow's door shut.

BUT this is not a love story, and such digressions are dangerous. I mentioned the matter to the professor next morning and somewhat to my surprise he took it quite seriously, shaking his head when I said I thought it was merely a dream.

"Possibly, Leyton," he remarked, peering at me thoughtfully, "possibly not. But whatever it may have been, from what you say Molly seems to have been very much upset. I think a change will do her good."

I suppose my face fell, for he chuckled to himself.

"What do you say to all three of us going to investigate what I was talking to you about last night at dinner?" he went on. "This cult—this ancient religion—let's start today and go to the place, the secret place, where it still flourishes. If you bring your influence to bear on Molly"—he looked at me slyly—"she won't refuse. Besides, it will do her good."

"Have you any idea where it is, professor?" I asked.

"Between here and Luxor," he answered. "We will take a dahabeah, and the exact place will be shown to me by the man I met in the bazaar yesterday."

Now the prospect of a few days practically alone with Molly on board a dahabeah was eminently attractive, but I couldn't help pointing out something that seemed to have escaped the professor's notice.

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure, professor," I said, "but do you think that even if we find the place the priests will let you see anything? I mean these religious sects guard their secrets most carefully from unbelievers and infidels."

"Once we get to the Pool of the Sacred Crocodile," he answered, and his blue eyes were staring at me with almost uncanny brightness, "once we get there, we shall have no difficulty. But Molly must come—you must see to that. I couldn't leave her here after this shock."

"I imagine your niece would like the trip," I answered. "Anyway, here she is now. So you'd better suggest it yourself."

And it was while he was suggesting it to Molly, who steadily refused to meet my eye, that I looked up to see Jim Maitland strolling across the lounge.

"Hello, Dick," came his cheerful voice. "I heard you were staying here. How goes it?"

I murmured an excuse and followed him to a table a little distance away.

"Who's the girl, old man?" he asked. "She's a corker for looks."

"She's a corker in every way, Jim," I answered.

He grinned suddenly.

"So that's how it lies, is it?" he said. "My congratulations, old Dick. Or is it a little premature? I see that so far you haven't squandered your substance at the jeweler's."

"It's not actually fixed yet, Jim," I said, a bit sheepishly, "but I'm hoping it will be very soon. We're going off today with the old bird—if we can fix up a dahabeah. He's her uncle, and he's sane on all points except Egyptology. Come and be introduced."

I TOOK him over to the professor and Molly and we sat down.

"I think it sounds like a lovely trip, don't you, Mr. Leyton?" said Molly demurely. "Will you be in Cairo when we return?"

"I—ah——" I began, staring at her foolishly. "I—ah——"

"Wonderful conversationalist, isn't he?" murmured Jim. "And where are you going, Miss Tremayne?"

"Toward Luxor, Mr. Maitland. My uncle wants to find some place with a most romantic name. It's called

the Pool of the Sacred Crocodile. Isn't that lovely?"

Jim stared at her for a moment or two in silence; then with a slight frown he turned to the professor.

"What on earth do you want to go there for, sir?" he asked quietly.

"Do you know it, Mr. Maitland?" cried the professor eagerly.

"I know of it," said Jim. "I know of it as the headquarters of one of the most secret and abominable cults handed down from ancient Egypt. And I can assure you, professor," he went on, after a little pause. "that you will be wasting your time if you go there." I frowned at him horribly, but strangely enough Jim seemed very serious. "No white man would ever be allowed inside their temple."

"I think I shall be able to arrange it, Mr. Maitland," said the professor, rubbing his hands together. "You see I am not quite an ordinary white man, and I am acquainted with one or two points concerning the ancient history of the cult, of which even one of their leading adepts seemed in ignorance. It will be a most interesting piece of research work—most interesting. In return for—for what I can give them I am to be allowed to have a copy of the ritual which has been handed down intact for three thousand years; ritual, Mr. Maitland, which no man living, save those priests, has ever thought of in his wildest dreams."

"Well," said Jim grimly, "all I can say, professor, is this: If one tenth of the rumors I have heard are true the best thing you can do will be to burn the book unread."

BUT the professor seemed not to hear. His little blinking eyes were fixed on Molly.

For a while the conversation became general, and it wasn't until an hour or two later that I was able to ask Jim what he had meant by being so serious. The professor was out arranging about a dahabeah; Molly was in her room packing.

"You darned tactless blighter!" I said, pushing a Martini in his direction. "What did you try to put the old man off for?"

"Dick," he answered quietly, "you know that I'm not exactly an imaginative cove; you know that there are not many things on two legs or four that I'm frightened of. But I tell you that no power on this earth would induce me willingly to have anything to do with the sect whose secret temple is at the Pool of the Sacred Crocodile. There are stories of black magic and devil worship which make one pinch one's self to see if one is awake. There are stories of human sacrifice carried out with the most appalling rites. There are stories of dead men and women coming to life again and walking around the temple, to dive finally into the pool from which there is no return."

I stared at him in amazement.

"But, great Scott, old man!" I cried. "Do you believe them?"

He didn't answer; he was looking over my shoulder through the open doors of the bar.

"Something has happened to Miss Tremayne," he said quietly, and the next instant Molly was beside me.

"Dick," she whispered, "he's in the hotel—that native. He was standing outside the door of my room again. Just now—as I was packing. I looked out into the passage, and there he was—staring, just the same as last night."

"I'll go and see if I can find the scoundrel!" I cried, and dashed upstairs.

But the passage was empty; there was no trace of the mysterious native. And I was just going down again, when the door of the professor's room opened as I passed and he peered out, looking uneasily up and down the corridor.

"Hello!" I said. "I thought you were out making arrangements for dahabeah."

"I have made them," he answered curtly. "We start this afternoon."

He shut the door again abruptly, and I went down to the bar feeling very thoughtful. For over the professor's head, reflected in a mirror on the other side of the room, I had seen a native. For a moment our eyes had met, then he had vanished. A vague fear took possession of me, and a sudden distaste for the proposed trip filled my mind. And then I cursed myself for a nervous fool. It was Jim's fault—talking all that bunkum. And the native I had seen in the professor's room had been some dealer with whom he was driving a bargain. After all, what could happen in the twentieth century to three English people in a dahabeah a few miles south of Cairo? The whole thing was preposterous. But, try as I would to shake it off, I knew it was there, at the back of my mind.

It was just before we left that Jim took me to one side.

"Whatever you do, Dick," he said gravely, "don't let Miss Tremayne out of your sight or her uncle's, once you get to your destination. One of you must always be with her."

"What on earth are you frightened of, Jim?" I demanded.

"I don't know, old man," he answered. "That's the devil of it—I don't know."

As he said—that was the devil of it. There are depths of cold-blooded villainy at which the mind jibs even when the proofs are at hand. And when there are no proofs it is small wonder that one's suspicions are not aroused.

Especially when there are other things to think about. As I have said, this is not a love story, but the professor was preoccupied, and Molly was—just Molly. And there was the little matter concerning the men who had called her darling to be threshed out.

The boat was a comfortable one fitted with a small motor engine and for two days we went slowly toward Luxor, tying up at night. We hardly saw the professor except at meals, and then he barely spoke. He sat sunk in thought, shooting strange little birdlike glances at Molly until she got quite annoyed with him. And his queer mood showed no signs of abating as time went on. It was toward the evening of the second day that he appeared on deck with a pair of field glasses. His hands were trembling with excitement as he searched the left bank of the river, and suddenly he gave a little cry of triumph.

"We are there!" he shouted. "We have arrived."

He gave a frenzied order to the captain, who swung the helm over and steered toward a small landing stage which jutted out from the bank. Behind it, partially screened by a small orange grove, the outlines of a house could be seen, and on the landing stage itself there stood a native—motionless as if carved out of bronze.

I SUPPOSE we must have been still a hundred yards away when we heard a frantic commotion among the crew. They were jabbering wildly together and it seemed to me that they were in a state of the utmost terror. In fact we bumped that landing stage badly, as the men—huddled together forward—refused to use a boat hook or make her fast. It was left to the captain and me to tie her up, and it struck me that though he was an educated man the captain himself had no liking for his berthing place.

His eyes continually came around to the tall native who had stepped on board the instant we came alongside, and when we had finished making her fast he went up to the little bridge and stayed there, while I went aft to join Molly. A few yards away the professor and the native were talking earnestly together, and Molly slipped her hand through my arm.

"Dick," she whispered, "I'm frightened. Don't leave me. That man has been looking at me just like that brute did at Shephard's. I wish we'd never come. I believe your friend was right."

I soothed her, though I didn't feel too happy in my own mind, for it came home to me very forcibly that in the event of trouble everything would devolve on me. The professor was an old man, and I placed no reliance whatever on the captain. In fact, it was not the first time in my life that I would willingly have paid a large sum of money to have Jim at my side.

Suddenly the professor came over to me.

"We are in luck," he said, and his eyes were gleaming. "We are to be allowed to see the sacred crocodile at once."

Molly drew back.

"I don't think I want to, Uncle John," she said. "You go—and I'll stay here with Dick."

"Don't be ridiculous, child!" he snapped. "It is what we have come here for. You will see a sight that no white woman has seen for a thousand years—the inner temple of one of the sister cults of Ammon Ra. Come at once."

He led the way, and after a moment's hesitation Molly followed.

"We'd better humor him, Dick," she whispered, to stop with a little start as the crew set up a hideous wailing. It ceased abruptly as the native who had awaited us on the landing stage stepped over to them and said something in a fierce voice. Then he came back and led the way toward the house half hidden in the trees, with the professor shaking with excitement just behind him, and Molly and I bringing up the rear. She was still clinging to my arm, and I could feel that she was trembling.

"Dick, I hate it," she whispered. "Promise you won't leave me."

"I promise, darling," I answered, slipping my right hand into my coat pocket. There is something very comforting about the feel of an automatic pistol at times——

OUR guide stalked slowly on toward the house. There was no sign of any one in the overgrown garden; there was no sign of life in the house itself. But when he knocked three times on the door it swung open, slowly, of its own accord—and he stood aside to let us enter. In front lay a long stone passage, lighted with innumerable lamps and hung with priceless tapestries.

Braziers sent forth choking clouds of incense which almost stifled one, but in spite of the overpowering fumes there was another smell—a cloying, horrible smell. For a while I could not place it, and then it came to me. It was muck—a faint, but unmistakable odor of muck.

Our guide stalked slowly on, while the professor darted from side to side, staring at the hangings on the walls. He was in a condition bordering on idiocy, and even I was beginning to feel excited. And then another door opened slowly, and Molly and I stopped with a gasp of disgust.

For in an instant the faint smell of muck had become an overpowering stench. Wave after wave of it came through the door, catching one's throat with a sickening nausea. And once again the guide stood aside to let us pass through. It was the actual pool itself that lay in front of us.

It was hewn out of a sort of sandstone rock. A gallery some two yards wide stretched around the walls at the same level as we were standing; while directly opposite us, on the other side of the pool, a heavy curtain concealed what appeared to be another door. In each corner sat a motionless priest, cross-legged in front of a burning brazier, and swinging from the center of the roof was a marvelous old lamp which provided the only light. Cut into the walls were various Egyptian designs which roused the professor to the verge of frenzy. And finally just in front of us there stuck out over the pool a thing that looked like a diving board. It shone yellow in the light, and with a sort of dull amazement I realized that it was solid gold.

"The actual platform of death," whispered the professor in my ear. "Thousands of victims have stepped off that into the pool. And to think that we are the first white people to have seen it!"

"Good heavens!" I muttered. "Human sacrifice."

FASCINATED against my will, I stepped forward and peered into the pool below. And the next instant I heard Molly give a shuddering gasp.

"Look, Dick, look! Over there in the corner."

Just rising above the surface was a thing that looked like a motionless bit of wood. Suddenly clear and distinct a bell chimed out. As if in answer to a signal there was a swirl in the black, oily liquid of the pool, a vast head and snout showed for a moment above the surface, and I had a glimpse of the most enormous crocodile I have ever seen. And the bit of wood was no longer there—only sluggish ripples and an overpowering wave of fetid muck.

With an effort I took my eyes away from the pool and looked up. The curtain opposite had been pulled aside, and a man was standing there staring at Molly. He was clad in some gorgeous garment, but it was not at his clothes that I was looking—it was at the sinister, evil face.

And as I looked I heard Molly's voice, which seemed to come from a distance, murmuring:

"Take me away, Dick! Take me away. There's that awful native again—the one who haunted me at Shephard's."

And it was also the native whom I had seen reflected in the mirror in Professor John Gainsford's room.

He disappeared as suddenly as he had come and Molly gave a sigh of relief.

"Let's get out, Dick, for goodness sake," she said urgently. "The smell of this place is too fearful. I can't stand it another moment!"

I was only too glad to agree. The door behind us was open, and we went through it, intent only on escaping into the fresh air. And not until we were clear of the entrance door, with the scent of the orange trees around us, did we breathe freely again.

"Dick—what an awful house!" cried Molly.

"It was pretty fierce," I agreed. "By the way, where is the professor?"

Molly laughed.

"It would take more than a bad smell to get him away. I expect the old dear is perfectly happy in there, with his little drawings on the walls and things. But nothing on this earth would induce me to go inside again—nothing! Did you see that man, Dick—the one on the other side of the pool?"

"I saw him," I answered briefly.

"What was he doing in Cairo? And why is he here dressed like that?" She gave a little shudder. "Dick, you may think it fanciful of me and silly, but inside that house just now I had the most extraordinary feeling.

"Take me away, Dick! Take me away!" cried Molly. "There's that awful native again—the one who haunted

Apart altogether from that horrible crocodile and the smell—I felt as if I was in the presence of something incredibly evil. I hardly know how to express it, but it seemed to me as if there was some devilish influence brooding over that pool. I felt it before that man came in—but I felt it a thousand times more as he stood there."

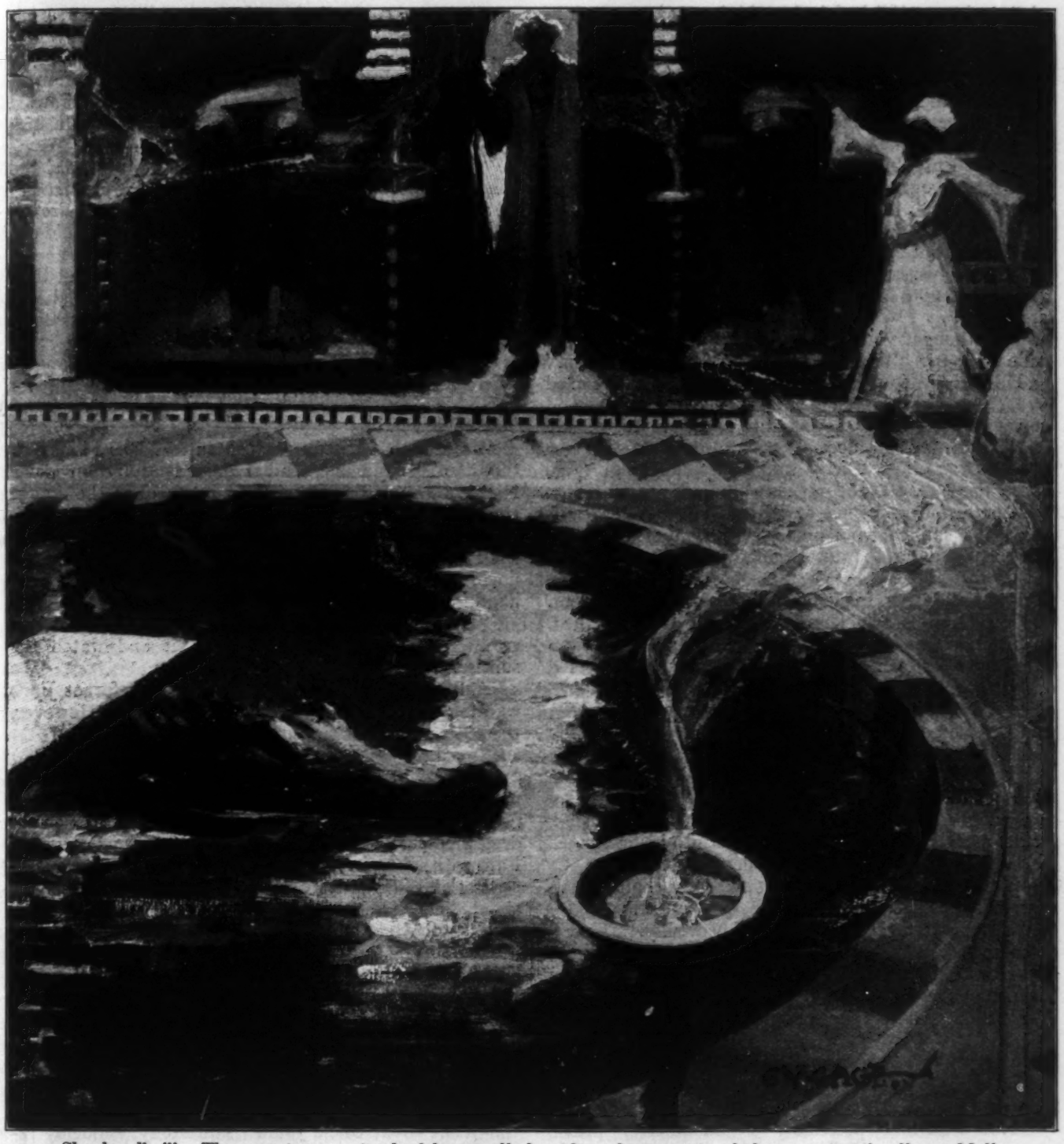
I nodded gravely.

"If half the rumors I've heard are true, dear, I'm not surprised. Personally I couldn't get beyond the smell, but some pretty dreadful things have happened in that house. You saw that gold inlaid board in front of you stretching out over the pool? Well, according to your uncle, thousands of victims have stepped off that platform into that pool—for the edification of that crocodile—or one of its predecessors."

She shuddered again and I slipped my arm around her waist. Did I say that one point at any rate had been very satisfactorily settled during our trip from Cairo?

"Don't worry your head about it any more, sweetheart," I said gently. "You've seen the crocodile and you've smelt the blighter, and that concludes your part of the entertainment. Let's go on board and get something to wash this filthy taste out of our mouths."

We walked down to the landing stage and stepped on to the dahabeah. The boat seemed strangely quiet, but it was only after I had pressed the bell in the little dining room three times without any result that I began to feel uneasy. I went into the pantry and kitchen and there was no sign of either cook or steward. I went on deck again to find the captain, and his cabin was empty. Finally I went to the crew's quarters and peered in: there was not a soul to be seen. The crew had deserted the boat, lock, stock and barrel; even the captain had gone with them.



me at Shephard's!" The curtain opposite had been pulled aside and a man stood there staring fixedly at Molly

For a moment or two I stood there wondering what to do. I didn't want to alarm Molly needlessly, but it was manifestly impossible to keep her in ignorance of the situation for long.

Just then a step behind me on the deck made me look around. Molly was coming toward me with a letter in her hand.

"It was on the sideboard, Dick," she said, holding it out. "It's addressed to you."

I GLANCED at it. To my amazement the handwriting was Jim's. And the note inside was laconic and to the point.

Get out of this at once. Don't spend the night here on any account.

"What is it, Dick?" she asked, looking at me steadily.

I handed her the slip of paper without comment.

"It's from Jim Maitland," I said, when she had read it. "The man I introduced to you at Shephard's. And when Jim tells you to do something there is generally a pretty good reason for doing it. Unfortunately, the whole crew—including the precious captain— have chosen this moment to depart."

I needn't have worried about alarming Molly; she heard the news without turning a hair.

"I wonder where Mr. Maitland is," she said thoughtfully. "He must be somewhere about to have left that note."

"He might have sent it," I answered. "Though nothing would give me greater pleasure than to see him step over the gangway at this moment."

"What are we going to do, Dick?"

"That's just the point, darling: what *are* we going to do? Steering this thing is a matter of special knowl-

edge, and even if I had it I couldn't manage a boat of this size with only you and the professor."

The same thought occurred to both of us simultaneously.

"I'll go and look for him, darling," I answered, with a great deal more assurance than I really felt. "He's probably forgotten that we even exist."

"Then I'm coming too," she said quietly, and nothing I could say would dissuade her.

BUT this time our fears proved groundless. Hardly had we entered the orange grove on the way to the house, when we saw the professor coming toward us. He was muttering to himself, and under his arm he carried a large book.

"We thought you were lost, professor," I said, as he came up to us. "We were just coming to look for you."

He peered at us vaguely, as if he hardly recognized us. Then, without even answering, he went past us and we saw him go below. And in the still evening air we heard the sound of a door shutting.

"You were right, Dick," said Molly, laughing. "We simply don't exist at the moment."

"I'm afraid we've got to," I said gravely. "I can't help it if I do incur your uncle's wrath, my dear, but he must be told about the state of affairs. I'm going to have it out with him."

I went below to his cabin and knocked on the door.

"Professor, I must have a talk with you," I called.

I heard him muttering to himself inside, and after a while the door opened about two inches and he peered out.

"Go away," he said irritably. "I'm busy."

"You've got the rest of your life in which to study that book," I said sternly, and put my foot behind the door to prevent his shutting it. "But what the duration will amount to unless you listen to me, I can't say."

I intended to frighten him and apparently I succeeded, for he opened the door and I stepped into his cabin.

"What do you mean?" he said nervously.

"Well, in the first place the crew and the captain have deserted."

"Oh! I know—I know!" he cried peevishly. "They'll all come back tomorrow."

"How did you know?" I said, staring at him in surprise.

He blinked at me for a second, then looked away.

"One of the priests told me that they had gone," he said at length.

In an instant all my worst fears came crowding back into my mind.

"Now look here, professor," I said quietly, "please pay attention to me. I know nothing about the particular sect whose headquarters are in that house, but you've got to remember that we have on board here a girl who is your niece and who is going to be my wife. You've also got to remember that to all intents and purposes we are on shore, and that we three are alone. Now I have the best of reasons for believing that the very gravest danger threatens us tonight. I suggest, therefore, that we should cast adrift, and drift downstream."

"Quite impossible, Leyton!" he cried angrily. "Out of the question. I'm amazed that you should even suggest such a thing. The most ancient ritual of the cult is being given tonight for my special benefit. I came here especially to see this actual ceremony! What danger are you frightened of? What danger can there be? You talk like a foolish, hysterical girl!"

Jim's words, spoken in Cairo, came back to me.

"I don't know, old man. That's the devil of it—I don't know."

And now, confronted by the excited little man, I felt the most infernal fool. My fears did seem like the vaporings of hysteria. If only I had had one definite thing to go on. But I hadn't—with the solitary exception of the crew's desertion. That, and Jim's roughly-scrawled note. And to both of them the professor turned a deaf ear.

"Ridiculous!" he snorted. "The captain was allowed ashore to attend the celebrations which always accompany this ceremonial and the crew have taken French leave and gone too. That is no reason why we should run the boat on a sandbank. As for your friend's note——" He shrugged his shoulders contemptuously. And then suddenly his manner changed, and he smiled almost benevolently. "Believe me, my dear fellow, you exaggerate tremendously. Do you think for one moment that I would allow my dear niece to run into any danger? There is no suggestion that she should come tonight—or you. You can stay with her and guard her against any possible harm."

And with that I had to be content. I heard him lock the door behind me, and I joined Molly on deck. Night had come down and the faint scent of the orange trees filled the air. On the bank everything was quiet, save for an occasional jackal in the distance; the house itself was silent as the grave. Briefly I told her what her uncle had said, and when I had finished she slipped her hand into mine.

"Don't let's worry, Dick," she whispered. "Let him go to his old crocodile, while we sit and watch the sunrise."

And after a while I forgot my fears. I forgot Jim's warning, I forgot everything except—— However, there is no prize for the correct answer.

And now I come to the thing that happened that night at the Pool of the Sacred Crocodile. There will be people who will say that it is all wild hallucination—a drug dream. They are entitled to their opinion, even as I am entitled to mine.

It was just as Molly and I were beginning to think about dinner and had decided to go and forage for ourselves that Abdullah the steward suddenly appeared in front of us and announced that it was ready.

"Where have you been?" I cried angrily. "I searched all over the place for you an hour or so ago."

HE was profuse in his apologies and explanations, and though I was far from satisfied there was nothing to be done about it. Dinner was ready and we sat down to it.

"What about Uncle John?" said Molly, suddenly remembering that he had not come down.

It appeared that he had given strict orders not to be disturbed, and so we waited no longer. The cook, Abdullah's brother, was a good cook, and in spite of his absence earlier in the evening he had prepared a good dinner. In fact, by the time we had reached the Turkish coffee stage I was feeling quite at peace with the world. Turkish coffee was our cook's specialty and on that particular night he excelled himself. Even Molly remarked on it as Abdullah refilled her cup.

Of course it was in my coffee—the particular drug they used. What it was I don't know, though it must have been practically tasteless. But whatever it was, they put it in my coffee and not in Molly's. And as long as I live I shall never forget the supreme mental agony of those few seconds after the realization of what had happened came to me. Molly was staring out through the open doorway into the wonderful desert night. I could see her sweet profile and her tender smile.

And then I made a desperate effort to stand up. I stood there for a second or two clutching the table, making inarticulate attempts to speak. I can see now the look of frightened horror in her eyes as she gazed at me; I can hear the hoarse croak which I gave, and which was meant to be an imperative order to her to go to her cabin and lock the door. And then I crashed back in my chair, dragging the tablecloth with me.

"Dick! Dick! What's the matter?"

I heard her voice crying from a great distance and I made another futile effort to speak. But it was useless; she was getting hazier and hazier. Suddenly she gave a little scream, and shrank back against the side of the salon. She was no longer looking at me, but into the darkness outside.

"Uncle John!" she screamed. "Uncle John! Save me!"

And then she rushed to me and clung to my chair. Oh, the agony of that moment, when I realized that I couldn't protect her! Hazily, through the fumes of the dope, I saw the menacing figures she had seen coming to her out of the night. They stood on the other side of the table: the man who had been in Cairo in the center, the man who had met us on the landing stage on his right, and one I had not seen on his left. They were all three dressed in gorgeous robes and they all three stood motionless, staring at Molly.

I heard her terrified whisper, "Dick! Help me, Dick!" and I lay there sprawling, helpless. And still they stood there—staring at my adored girl. Hypnotism, of course—I realized that afterward. They were hypnotizing her in front of my eyes, and, poor child, it didn't take long. It cannot have been more than a minute before I saw her—my Molly—walking toward them with little short jerky steps. I could see her hands clenched rigidly at her sides; I could see her dear eyes fixed on the central man in a dreadful, glassy stare.

As she advanced they backed away—step by step—till they passed out of the range of vision. Only she was left, following them out into the night. And a moment or two later she, too, vanished. I heard her footsteps on the deck—then silence. She had gone—without any one to help her—gone to that devilish house. With one last glimmer of consciousness I saw again the sluggish ripples lapping the sides of the pool, the great head and monstrous jaws of the crocodile, the golden platform—the platform of death. And even as wave after wave of the drug surged over me, it seemed to me that I gave one desperate shout: "Jim—save her. Save Molly!" And then I slept.

THE lamp was smoking and guttering in its final gasp when I opened my eyes. For a moment or two I remembered nothing; I felt as if I had just awakened from some awful nightmare. And then the tablecloth which still covered me, the broken coffee cups, the débris on the floor brought me to my feet with a dreadful terror clutching at my heart. It was no nightmare—it was the truth! I pulled out my watch; it showed a quarter past twelve. And we had sat down to dinner at half-past eight. For more than three hours Molly had been in the hands of those devils.

I slipped my hand into my pocket, and cursed foolishly. Some one had taken my revolver. And there was no time to look for another weapon; there was no time for anything except to get to Molly at once.

And was there even time for that? As I raced through the orange grove toward the house the thought hammered at my brain. Was I too late? What had those devils done to her in the three hours I had lain unconscious?

A man sprang at me as I reached the door and I hit him on the point of the jaw with all my weight behind the blow. He went down like a log, and I felt a little better. Then I flung open the door and dashed into the passage, to pause for a moment in sheer amazement at the spectacle.

The braziers still poured forth their choking clouds of incense; the innumerable lamps were lighted as they had been that afternoon. But now the passage was not empty—it was crowded with natives. And one and all were bleeding from self-inflicted wounds. Then there came the deep note of a drum and I realized that it was drum madness—that strange phenomenon of Africa. A sickening, horrible scene—and in my mind the sickening, horrible thought that for three hours my Molly had been in this ghastly house—alone.

DODGING between the writhing men, I rushed to the second door. It opened without difficulty, and the next moment half a dozen men had hurled themselves upon me. I fought wildly, with the strength of despair. They held me—two of them to each arm, and what I saw almost snapped my reason.

Facing me were the three natives who had come to the dahabeah that night. They were on the other side of the pool, clad now in robes even more gorgeous than before. Behind them was the drum beater, rocking to and fro in a sort of ecstacy, and ranged on each side of them were other natives intoning a monotonous dirge.

Below, in the pool, swirl after swirl of the noisome black water showed that the crocodile was waiting for the culmination of the ceremony. And the foul brute knew what that culmination was—even as the fouler brutes opposite knew—even as I knew. For standing on the platform with her eyes still fixed on the leading native was Molly—my Molly.

In a frenzy of madness I screamed her name. She took no notice, and once again I struggled desperately. If only I could get to her, pull her back—save her somehow. But they held me—there were six of them now—and when I shouted at her again one of them jammed my handkerchief into my mouth.

Suddenly the leader raised his hand, and Molly took another faltering step forward. One step more along the platform of death; one step nearer the end—the end where there would be no more board for her feet, only the pool below.

The drum beats became more frequent; the singers' voices rose to a harsh screaming. And, looking down, I saw the crocodile lashing the water with its tail. The huge jaws were open; I could almost smell the brute's foul breath as it waited for the end.

And then it happened. Jim—Jim the superb, Jim the incomparable—was there on the other side of the pool. Jim with a jagged wound on his cheek, and his clothes in tatters. Jim with his eyeglass—and a look of cold, devilish fury in his face.

I heard the dull smash of breaking bone as he hit the drum beater, and then I went mad with the sheer tense excitement of it. For Jim had gone Berserk. With a great shout he seized the center native—the leader—and with one stupendous heave he lifted him above his head. For a moment he stood thus, while the others watched in stupefied silence. Then with cries of fury they closed in on him, only to stop as his voice rang out, speaking their own language:

"If any one touches me, this man goes into the pool." He threw back his head and laughed, and the natives watched him, snarling and impotent. "Go to her, Dick!" he cried, and the next instant Molly was in in my arms. I dragged her off that damnable platform—and then I looked back at Jim.

The sweat was gleaming on his forehead—the strain of holding that full-grown native was taking even his great strength. But once again he laughed.

"To the boat, old Dick. Good luck."

And in his heart of hearts that great-souled sportsman thought it was good-by. For even now, heedless of his threat, the natives were closing in on him from each side, and suddenly one of them seized his arm.

"So be it!" he roared, and with a mighty heave he threw the leader of the cult into the pool below. There was one frenzied shriek of agonized terror; a dreadful swirling rush through the water; the snap of great jaws. And suddenly the blackness of the pool was stained a vivid crimson. To the crocodile it mattered not whether it was priest or victim——

I waited no longer. Taking advantage of the momentary stupefaction, Jim had vanished and the next instant I was rushing Molly along the passage outside. With the cessation of the drum the natives there had become quieter and no one interfered with us. We reached the outer door and, half dragging, half carrying Molly, I ran on toward the boat. Behind us I could hear a frenzied babel of cursing and shrieking, but it seemed to come from the other side of the house. The whole pack of them were after Jim—and gradually the noise grew fainter and fainter. He was leading them away from us.

I darted on board to find the captain and two of the crew standing there.

"Quick, sir!" he cried and I realized that the engine was going. Already he was casting off, and I shouted to him to stop. Once Molly was safe I had to go back to help Jim. I took her below and laid her on the berth in her cabin. Then I rushed on deck again to find that we were in midstream.

"Orders, sir," said the captain, coming up to me. "Orders from the Englishman with the eyeglass."

I looked ashore: the bank was alive with lights. And then suddenly I heard the most welcome sound I have ever heard in my life—a great, hearty laugh, Jim's laugh.

"Stop the old tub, Dick," came his voice.

And then I saw him, swimming out toward us. We went full speed astern, and half a minute later he swarmed up the side on a rope.

"Not a healthy spot, old Dick," he said, with his hands on my shoulders. "Is the girl all right?"

"I think so, old man," I answered. "Thanks to you. But I feel all dazed still. How did you get there?"

"All in good time," he laughed. "At the moment a large whisky and soda is indicated."

We went into the salon, and it was as my hand was on the siphon that a sudden awful thought struck me.

"The professor, Jim," I muttered. "I'd forgotten all about him."

"You needn't worry about the professor," he remarked grimly. "The gentleman I threw to the crocodile was not its first meal tonight."

"You mean they've killed him?" I exclaimed.

"Yes, they've killed him," he answered. "And I can think of no white man who more richly deserved to die."

And as the boat chugged steadily on through the soft Egyptian night, Jim filled in the gaps of the story.

"Of course I hadn't an inkling of the real truth when you left Cairo—but I was darned uneasy in my mind," he began. "And after you'd gone off in this barge I started making a few inquiries. Not, I may say, among the powers that be, but from certain disreputable pals of mine. Didn't it strike you, old man, that you got this dahabeah with exceptional promptitude?"

"Now you mention it—I suppose we did."

"The gentleman I put into the pool tonight fixed it, as he could fix most things when he put his mind to it. And on this occasion he fixed it as the result of the most diabolical bargain with Professor Gainsford which it is conceivable to think of a man making.

"Mark you, I didn't find it out in Cairo, but I heard enough to send me off by train. I got out at Minieh and then the game began. I tell you, Dick, I believe it would be easier to get the Grand Lama of Tibet into an A. B. C. shop in London than to get through the outer defenses of that foul sect. It's a good trek from the railway station and with every mile the reticence and secrecy grew more profound. Then I got hold of information that confirmed what I'd heard in Cairo. A great event was portending — some huge tamasha. You know how these things get about among the natives. But still I couldn't find out for certain what it was.

"Then you arrived, and I came on board to see you and make you clear out. But the boat was deserted."

"We were up in the house itself," I explained.

He nodded. "I know. I sat down to wait, and then they caught me napping. A native came to the bunk and told me he'd tell me everything. So I scribbled that note, and I followed him. He took me with great secrecy into the house, where some one promptly sandbagged me. And when I came to, I found myself trussed up like a fowl, occupying the place next to the skipper of this craft. And it was he who told me the truth.

"The professor had wished to obtain possession of some book of ritual belonging to this sect. And the native had agreed—at a price. The price was the sacrifice of your girl."

"What?" I roared. "You mean that that infernal murderer brought Molly here knowing all along what was going to happen?"

"That is exactly what I mean," said Jim gravely. "And that's what the professor believed. But, unfortunately for him, the native's mind is tortuous. The sacrifice of a white girl was his object, and he didn't mind what he promised to achieve the result. And having, as he thought, achieved it when you arrived, he changed his mind about the book of ritual. Which was unfortunate for the professor."

HE broke off suddenly and stared over my shoulder. Molly was standing in the door: Molly—sane and herself again—but with a look of terror in her eyes.

"Dick," she said, "I've had the most awful dream. I dreamed that I was standing near that dreadful pool and there were natives all around. And suddenly they dragged Uncle John in and pushed him into the pool."

"I'm afraid, Miss Tremayne," Jim said gently, "that it wasn't a dream. Professor Gainsford is dead."

She swayed and sat down weakly.

"Oh, the brutes—the brutes! Dick, why did we ever come here?" And then she stared at me with puzzled eyes. "But if it wasn't a dream—why, how did I see it? You *can't* mean that I was there and saw it! It hasn't really happened, has it?"

I went over and knelt beside her.

"Yes, darling," I said gently, "it's all true. It's really happened. And but for Jim——" I looked across at him; there are things which no man can put into words.

"Rot!" he cried cheerfully. "Utter rot, Dick. Though I admit it was touch and go till I found a sharp stone to cut through my ropes with. And now I think I'll leave you two."

He beckoned to me to follow him on deck.

"I wouldn't tell her the truth about her uncle, old man. At least—not yet." In the light of the dawn I saw his face, and it was very wistful. "She's a great girl, old Dick—great. You lucky, lucky devil!"

And with that Jim turned and went forward.

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Molding the Men of Tomorrow

By Robert H. Moulton

A JURY in a Chicago court had found him guilty of murder. Now he stood before the bar of justice awaiting sentence. The judge, looking down at the twenty-two-year-old boy with mingled pity and regret, asked him the formal question.

"Have you anything to say before sentence is pronounced?"

For some moments the youth remained silent, immovable, gazing fixedly at the floor. Finally with an effort he roused himself, looked the judge squarely in the eyes and spoke earnestly, almost fiercely:

"Judge, I never had a chance! That's the trouble. My father was a thief. The less I say about my mother the better. When I was a kid I was kicked, beaten, starved. I was taught to lie and steal as far back as I can remember. I was a drunkard almost from the time I could walk. If you are going to hang me for killing my pal when I was so drunk I didn't know what I was doing, I'll die game. But I never had a chance, judge, not a chance!"

Nevertheless justice had to be served, the law upheld. And a few weeks later Society had snuffed out the life of the boy who was its double victim—a victim of Society's neglect and its inadequacy to deal with the result of that neglect.

Now the scene shifts.

Recently, in that same city of Chicago, a boy received his diploma from a high standard technical school. He had not only earned his way through, but had contributed to the support of some relatives while doing it. He has a position now and is making good.

A few years ago that same boy—we will call him Dick—was a dependent. He had no wholesome home life; no one to feed, clothe or shelter him; no one to train or educate him. He was beginning to frequent corner saloons and pool rooms where "gangs" congregated. He seemed headed straight down the path followed by the other youth. Once they were members of the same gang.

And here is where the subject of this story, the Glenwood, Illinois, Manual Training School, comes in.

Dick was fortunate enough one day to help an elderly gentleman who had slipped on an icy sidewalk. Something about the boy attracted the old gentleman and he soon had his story. Then, being a patron of the Glenwood school, he decided that here was a likely prospect for it.

He told Dick about the school. He took him down there that he might see for himself what it was like. And a short time later Dick was duly enrolled as a student. Glenwood stepped in, before the youth became a delinquent or a criminal, and gave him his chance. He made the most of it, and instead of becoming a social and economic menace, the boy became an asset.

What Glenwood did for Dick it has done, in degree, for some seven thousand other boys during the thirty years of its existence. For these boys, taken from the tenements and streets of Chicago, it has provided school, vocation, industrial and home training. Almost without exception they have made good after leaving school.

And every one of them gives the credit to Glenwood. They are as loyal to the school as any college graduate to his alma mater.

Glenwood is in no sense a reform school, and the boys sent there are not bad boys; they are boys who are normal both physically and mentally, but who because of neglect, misfortune or environment are without proper homes. The whole idea of the school is to take these boys away from influences which might cause them to become a menace to society and to turn them into the kind of men the nation needs.

The history of Glenwood runs back into obscurity. About thirty-five years ago two good men in neighboring suburbs near Glenwood, twenty-four miles south of Chicago, began to take a few dependent boys from the city to their homes. They cared for them, taught them, and kept them as long as the home conditions of the boys made it necessary. The work of both grew a little. Other people began to take an interest in it.

In May, 1887, a number of these people met to organize and elect officers, preparatory to establishing a home for dependent, homeless boys. The total endowment of the home that day was a desire to save the boy. A month later a temporary home was found in an old building at Norwood Park and given a regenerating baptism of soap and water. A kitchen range, some dry goods and groceries, and a few mattresses were donated by friends. A short time later ten boys were sent out by the county court in Chicago—not bad boys, but homeless boys.

A YEAR later a number of women saw a place where they could take hold and do something worth while. They organized the Auxiliary Board. This Board, whose work deals almost entirely with the home side of the school, has continued down to the present time and in the more than thirty years of its existence has done a remarkable work in helping the school to success.

The first few years the school struggled along under more or less discouraging conditions. Then something in the nature of a miracle happened.

A few miles south of Norwood Park lived Milton George, a farmer, and his wife. As the result of years of toil and saving they had acquired a fine three-hundred-acre farm. But they were getting along in years, they were childless, without relatives of whom they knew, and they began to think about what would become of the farm when they were gone.

By chance they heard one day of the school at Norwood Park and a little later made it a visit. They were impressed by what they saw, but even more by the possibilities of the thing. Then the thought occurred to both—why not give their farm to the school?

The more they thought about it and talked it over, the nearer their problem—and incidentally that of the school—seemed to solution. Looking into the future they saw thousands of boys taken out of debauching surroundings and growing up to clean, useful manhood on their farm. There was a crop to raise!

That settled it. The farm of Milton George and his wife became the property of the Glenwood Manual Training School.

Today Glenwood has fifteen cottages, accommodating about thirty boys each, equipped with hot and cold water, steam heat, electric lights, and bathrooms; an administration building with offices, dormitory accommodations for employees and clubrooms for boys; a commodious and modern service building containing a complete equipment of dining rooms, kitchen, bakery, storerooms, with a drill hall and gymnasium in addition.

There is a home for the superintendent and his family, cottages for the farm supervisor and his assistant, a school building with accommodations for five hundred boys; a manual training building, a chapel, a laundry, a power house, a greenhouse, a creamery, and various farm buildings.

The entire enterprise is under the control of a board of governing members, sixty in number, representing the best of Chicago's citizenship, and is managed by a board of directors elected by the votes of these members. The president is Edward B. Butler.

Where do the boys at Glenwood come from, and who directs them to the school?

Well, most of them come from homes ruined by poverty, crime, ignorance, drunkenness, and social evils. A large number are orphans who have no recollection of any real home at all; they have just drifted along with the tide of human flotsam.

All this might suggest several hundred pale-faced, furtive, shuffling, hang-dog boys at Glenwood. But if one goes to the school expecting to see anything of the sort he will get the jolt of his life. Boys there are in abundance everywhere one looks or goes. But they are real boys; bright-eyed, smiling, happy and wholesome-looking youngsters—the sort you will find at the public school in some section of a large city where good homes predominate. They average close to the top both in appearance and behavior.

One naturally wonders how this was accomplished—such rough material so quickly shaped and polished.

In the first place, the boy who goes to Glenwood is made to feel at once that he is welcome—that he has found a real home in a big family of other boys. In the entire history of the school not more than half a dozen boys have ever "run away."

Great emphasis is placed on the home life at Glenwood and it is really the most important part of the school. The cottages in which the boys live are not chill, cheerless sleeping barracks, but bright, comfortable homes. Each boy has his own good bed with white sheets, big, soft pillows, and spotless spread. He has his own locker and treasure chest, his own towels, wash-cloth, comb, brush, toothbrush. Each has his own distinctive clothing.

One of the principal reasons for the harmony and homelike atmosphere existing in each cottage is the matron or "cottage mother" in charge.

In many cases these cottage matrons are the only mothers the boys have ever known. And the influence they exert for good is confined not alone to a boy's period of schooling, but frequently follows him in after life.

While Glenwood is not a military school in the strictest sense, military training is nevertheless one of the important features, for it is realized that besides inculcating in the boys the habits of prompt obedience, such training is valuable as an aid to physical development.

Glenwood has many of the features of o her regular schools, such as school colors, pins, clubs, baseball and football teams, prize drill companies, and their school anniversary day, all of which tend to develop an *esprit de corps*, which is a powerful factor for good.

That the training of the hand should keep pace with the training of the head is now an accepted principle of education. This principle was employed at Glenwood long before it prevailed in the public schools. The boys spend half a day, three hours, in the graded school, the work of which corresponds to that in other graded schools in Illinois. The other half of the school day is spent in manual training. Each boy has about four hours a day for play.

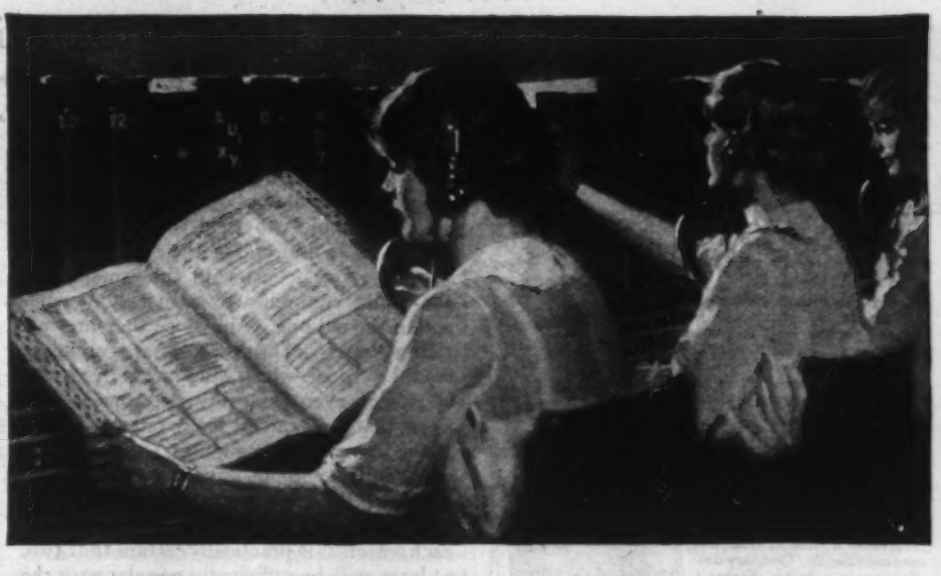
THE opportunities for an education along industrial and trade lines include machine shop practice, wood working, printing, shoemaking and shoe repairing, laundering, baking, gardening, farming and poultry raising. The work on the farm includes all branches, from the herding of sheep and calves on the lawns to running the threshing machine and operating the tractor.

When boys remain in the school long enough they are taught trades. The records of the school show, for example, that scores of graduates who learned mechanical and scientific metals trades now occupy enviable positions of high responsibility with automobile, steel and similar manufacturing concerns—positions that require creative and executive ability.

The biggest problem most parents and teachers have to solve is discipline. This problem would naturally seem most difficult where there are so many boys together, and where most of them come from street gangs. Yet discipline is so easy at Glenwood that it is almost automatic. Several things are responsible for this.

In the first place, every boy starts in at Glenwood with a perfectly clean record, no matter what his past has been—he has nothing to live down. Then he is placed largely upon honor; there is no code of rules and regulations. The boy is taught that he is a member of the community, that he must respect the rights and property of the community, and that if he would share the privileges and pleasures of community life, he must fit into it harmoniously.

Finally, there is the certain reward for well-doing. Through a merit system a boy's progress is measured and privileges and honors awarded.

The boys love Glenwood. Many of them weep when they leave. And they do not lose their affection for the school in after years. They come back for a visit whenever they get a chance and on every Anniversary Day there is certain to be a reunion of old grads.

Crossroads of Conversation

Could the telephone directory in the hands of each subscriber be revised from hour to hour, there would be no need for the information operator. But even during its printing and binding, thousands of changes take place in the telephone community. New subscribers are added to the list. Old ones move their places of business or of residence.

Though their names are not listed on the directory, these subscribers must be connected by the highways of speech with all others in the community. To supplement the printed page, there must be guides at the crossroads of conversation.

Such are the information operators, selected for their task because of quickness and accuracy, courtesy and intelligence. At their desks, connected with the switchboards in central offices, they relieve the regular operators from answering thousands of questions about telephone numbers that would otherwise impede the rendering of service. If they are unnecessarily asked for numbers already in the directory, service is retarded.

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What's Wrong with the Theatre?

[Continued from page 61]

and in 1923–4 they have over 6,000. Being always in the same playhouse, not having to take a new production out on the road so that real estate speculators can get a line on it to see if it promises to yield them a fat profit if they let it into one of their theatres, and working more or less with the same actors, the Guild can rehearse a new play while acting the old one. And since they are sure that at least 6,000 subscribers are coming to see the old one—which will practically pay for staging it, even if nobody else comes—they know that they cannot really fail any longer. If the first play isn't popular, they can try a new venture without any great loss.

Out of the five or six productions which they guarantee their subscribers to make each season, it is practically certain that two, at least, will be sufficiently popular with the public to take care of the profits, reimburse the actors and add to the sinking fund. As a matter of fact, the Guild have had no less than eight plays so extremely popular that they have had to be moved out of the Garrick to make room for new productions, and have continued in direct competition with the Broadway productions. When that was the case, the Guild found income coming in from more than one source. Two seasons ago while "Back To Methuselah" was at the Garrick, "He Who Gets Slapped" was uptown, and "Liliom" and "Mr. Pim Passes By" were on tour—in other words, income was accruing from four sources.

The economic foundations of the Guild's success, then, are, the coöperative system of production, automatically reducing expenses in proportion to the size of the receipts; comparatively—though not absolutely—low rental, because of the distance from the center of Broadway's theatre district; the low cost of the mechanical side of production, due in large measure to the ingenuity and artistic resourcefulness of Lee Simonson, the scenic director; and, finally and chiefly, the permanence of the institution, in one place, with a prepared program, making possible the advance subscriptions of several thousand people who thus, in effect, relieve the Guild from the fear of disaster. They always know enough is coming in to pay the bills.

Perhaps we ought to add to the economic foundations the fact that the Guild directors, who pick all plays by unanimous vote, after long discussion, are artists enough to know a good play when they see one, and idealistic enough to want to put on good, vital plays, and none others. That, of course, is what has inspired 6,000 of the public to subscribe in advance.

In plain language, the Theatre Guild have a real commercial theatre and the Broadway producers, whom we call commercial because they are always trying to save their skins by putting on popular trash, aren't commercial at all. They are merely gamblers. Unless they own their theatres, and make their money by collecting rent from other fellows, who really produce the plays, they aren't, most of them, going concerns. Or, rather, they are coming and going concerns—riding in limousines one year, and bankrupt the next.

But the Theatre Guild, praised by the public as idealists and artists, scorned by some of their fellow producers as "amateurs" and "dabblers," have a sound, sane, enduring business, that goes steadily on from year to year, growing slowly, perhaps, but healthily, and leading, it may well be, toward the ultimate goal of a repertoire company housed in a theatre of their own—a comfortable, scientifically equipped, rent-free building where at least 10,000 New Yorkers will subscribe for seats each season for each new play, where visitors will gravitate as a center of vital theatrical experiment, and where financial failure can only result from a continued term of incompetent artistic management and dry rot.

If that isn't good business, we don't know what is.

There are two things which discourage artistic freedom and creative experiment. One is the fear of financial failure, the other is the greed for large profits. The ordinary type of producer in our theatre is either a man who cannot afford failure, however idealistic he is, or else he is a man who is "in the theatrical game" for profits, not for love of the theatre—in short, a gambler. Neither the one nor the other can or will give us a free, vital, creative stage. The Theatre Guild solved the problem of experiment without the fear of failure, and because they are in the game for the love of the art of the theatre, they are satisfied with a reasonable financial return. They are not gamblers. They are not speculators. Being artists, they are content to be business men.

The stage in Europe has always been more interesting, more vital, more experimental than ours. It has been so because in the endowed, the State and municipal theatres there, the wolf didn't sit on the door mat, and authors, artists, managers dared to experiment. They were expected to experiment, in fact. The endowed theatre, however, is foreign to American institutions, and so, apparently, is the State theatre.

Community coöperation, however, is not foreign to us, and it is the watchword of the future. There are already community theatres on the Pacific coast. The audience who subscribe to the Theatre Guild are a little community, supporting the Guild's experiments. The 10,000 actors of America might bring about a great community theatre of the players themselves. Free the theatre from the economic incubus—that is the need. And, in various ways and places, we are learning that coöperation is the method.

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By EDWARD M. THIERRY

The Lincoln I Knew

[Continued from page 56]

"Lawlor and I are here playing at the Holiday Theatre this week in a stock company," he answered. "I'm going to Washington tonight."

"How can Lawlor get along without you?" I asked.

"Well, he'll have to tonight. I'm going to Washington without fail."

Within twelve hours Booth was being hunted as Lincoln's murderer.

I started out to work about 5.30 next morning. My room was a little over four blocks from the Barnum House. Crowds had gathered on the corners. Every one was excited. I saw men crying.

They told me Lincoln was assassinated. I was stunned.

There were no newsboys on the streets in those days. All I ever saw was one old man who sold papers around the streets. The morning papers generally came out in the forenoon or just after dinner, but this morning they ran a Lincoln extra.

I was standing in a crowd at the corner of Calvert and Baltimore streets, when a man said, "Well, it's a blame good thing Lincoln was shot!" Another man stepped right up to the speaker, tapped him on the shoulder and shot him through the head as he turned. Immediately after two policemen came up.

"You the man who did this killing?" they asked. "Yes," answered the man, "and I have five more shots in this revolver for any other men who say they're glad Lincoln was shot."

The policemen just turned away and the man walked down Calvert Street and was soon out of sight.

All day long the bells tolled in Baltimore. The town was paralyzed with grief, though it was a rebel town. Prayer services were held in the churches. The South mourned just as much as the North. None were divided about Lincoln.

IT hit me mighty hard, for I had lost the best friend I ever had.

John Price, the undertaker who had charge of Lincoln's funeral, telegraphed me at once to come on to Washington to drive the hearse. I went over on the first train and reported for duty at once.

His body lay in state at the White House. The funeral procession extended to the station a mile away. The minute guns were booming dismally from the encampments around Washington, and the church bells were tolling out their mournful sounds, and it seemed as if things would never be the same again. He was *dead!*

When I got on that hearse everything seemed over for me. I could see him as I last saw him with his gentle smile and his "Good morning, Joe." It did not seem possible that I would never hear his voice again.

That was the biggest thing I ever did in my whole life—driving Lincoln's hearse, and I'd crawl to Washington on my hands and knees tomorrow if he was there waiting for me. There wasn't anybody like him in the whole world. He was just Abraham Lincoln —everybody's friend.

From Dimes to Millions

[Continued from page 18]

factory and store on Canal Street and made more money, I believe, than he had ever expected to make in his life.

By this time we were in a position to talk quantities to the candy manufacturers, and they could not ignore us.

Today it is almost impossible to tell how much candy is manufactured for us by a great many factories. It would be mere speculation to guess how many millions of dollars these factories have made from our candy orders. In the year 1913 our sales were about 35,000 tons, or 70,000,000 pounds. In other words, we sold about three-quarters of a pound to every person in the United States. And on much of this vast quantity we had brought down the price to the people perhaps fifty per cent or more.

WE are still buying candy of D. Arnould, who has stayed by us all these years.

Now this candy line, which has been such a tremendous success in our stores, was never even thought of when the five-and-ten-cent business was started. It merely shows that oftentimes there are great opportunities lurking just out of sight and not always easy to get at.

Neither, in those early days, was there such a thing as china or crockery, or any kind of glassware to be found in a five-and-ten-cent store. The principal sales for the first ten years were made on tinware, small notions, stationery, a very few toys, and a very limited line of drygoods.

One day, in this same year of 1887, I happened to be in Akron, Ohio, and I went into a five-and-ten-cent store owned by B. R. Smith, formerly with Moore & Smith of Watertown. I saw on his counters some white cups, saucers and plates, and I asked him where he had bought them. He gave me this information, and added that the goods sold very fast.

In Trenton, N. J., some time later, I made up my mind to try out a few small purchases of earthenware. So I bought the goods in Trenton and put them into my Lancaster store at once.

I discovered that the profits on white cups, saucers and plates were very small; but they had a tendency to draw to the store a class of people we hadn't had before. The line increased until we had all kinds of cups, saucers and plates. Today this line is one of the biggest we have, and it is hard to understand why we didn't discover it until eight years after we started.

From the ordinary dishes we got into china. At first, it seemed absolutely impossible to think of selling china at five or ten cents. We found that the only way we could do it was to place large orders and get up our own decorations and shapes. Then we began to import the goods from European manufacturers. They came direct from manufacturer to consumer, so that we were able to sell decorated china cups, saucers and plates at ten cents apiece.

[Continued on page 118]

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From Dimes to Millions

[Continued from page 117]

One day I made up my mind to try a line of glassware. So I placed an order for a barrel of tumblers and goblets. The goods sold, and I reordered. The second lot sold, and I placed a larger order. Thus glassware kept on growing until it became a very large line. We don't always know what will sell until we look for markets.

I HAD another very striking illustration of this truth soon after I opened in Lancaster. When I went down there from New York State I knew nothing about Christmas tree ornaments, except that I had seen them in churches to the extent of a few small toys and some cornucopias filled with candy. In the fall of 1880, I went to an importing firm on Strawberry Street, Philadelphia, Myer & Schoenaman, to buy some toys, and about the first thing they did was to drag out a lot of colored glass ornaments the like of which I had never before seen.

"What are those things?" I asked.

They explained that these goods were, oh, such fine sellers, but I laughed.

"You can't sell me any foolish things like that," I said. "I don't believe they would sell, and most of them would be smashed, anyway, before there was a chance to sell them."

They explained that the profit was big enough to offset the breakage, but I was incredulous. It was hard to understand what the people would want of those colored glass things.

We argued back and forth for a long time, and finally the house made me the proposition that it would guarantee the sale, at retail, of twenty-five dollars' worth of the Christmas tree ornaments.

"All right," I agreed. "You can send them to me wholly at your own risk."

The goods arrived a few days before Christmas, and, with a great deal of indifference, I put them on my counters. In two days they were all gone, and I woke up. But it was too late to order any more, and I had to turn away a big demand. The next Christmas season I was on hand early with what I considered a large order, but it was not large enough. They proved to be the best sellers I had in my store for the holidays.

The following year I placed an import order through Myer & Schoenaman and another through Conway Brothers, also of Philadelphia. From that time on, the business in this line grew very fast. It has now grown to such proportions that it seems almost impossible to get enough of these goods manufactured for our use.

And this is a line that I couldn't see anything in, back in those early days!

In the fall of 1889, my friend B. F. Hunt, Jr., then at the head of Horace Partridge & Company, suggested that I go to Europe with him during the coming winter. He said that I could buy toys abroad very much cheaper than I could get them through the importers in America. In February, 1900, I did go to Europe, for the first time, with Mr. Hunt, for the purpose of purchasing toys. I took along a draft for $5,000, which I thought a large sum, ample to give me purchasing power at the lowest prices. Today, looking back, that draft seems very insignificant beside the millions of dollars we are spending abroad.

But even then the $5,000 proved insufficient for our year's purchases of toys. I believe we spent about $20,000, so fast did the business grow. Mr. Hunt introduced me to the principal manufacturers who made the kinds of goods I wanted, and I got my first big conception of the toy field. In subsequent years we came to have buyers over there constantly looking after our interests, and we established headquarters in Furth, Sonnenberg, Paris, Calais and across the Channel in London.

Throughout this task of getting things that we could sell for five and ten cents we were confronted with the indifference and unbelief of the manufacturers and jobbers, who would not grant, until we demonstrated it, that any possible market could exist for goods at such low prices. At least, they would not grant that any concern could do business on such prices and live. It was up to us to create the demand, in many lines, at such a very slender margin of profit to ourselves that the most rigid management and economy were necessary in order to prevent being swamped. Then, when we began to show this demand, we were able to hammer down prices or create the lines ourselves.

It was that way with hosiery, for instance. Until we created the demand at a loss to ourselves, we were never able to buy a single pair of women's or men's hose to sell legitimately at five or ten cents. Finally we got a manufacturer to make the goods for us, and the result was that we sold 38,000 cases of hosiery, with an average of sixty dozen to a case or more than 34,000,000 pairs.

It is a fact today that the buyers of five-and-ten-cent goods in a great many instances can purchase goods at much lower prices than the jobbers themselves, because the five-and-ten-cent stores pay cash for their goods, while the jobbers usually purchase on from thirty to sixty days' time.

Thus, you see, we had a different vision on the markets, and I think it was this vision that enabled us to grow in spite of all the obstacles thrown in our way. But it was years before manufacturers really began to come over to our vision. A manufacturer of knives and forks, for instance, sold these goods for four dollars a dozen and made perhaps forty or fifty per cent profit, selling in small quantities. He could not see that if he manufactured goods to sell at a very much cheaper price his turnover might be made vastly larger, so that his profit would be very much greater in the aggregate, even though his ratio of profit was only twenty-five or thirty per cent.

TODAY, the attitude of the manufacturers has changed entirely. The manufacturers cater to and sell to all the big retail merchants, as well as to the small jobbers that supply the thousands of little stores that cannot place large orders. This is an advantage not only to the department stores and the five-and-ten-cent stores, but to the public at large, in reducing the cost of things.

I feel that the five-and-ten-cent stores have done a very big constructive work in the economics of this country, and have accomplished more to bring down and keep down the cost of living than any other factor in the life of the nation.

Eddie Arrives

[Continued from page 44]

"I hear different, Eddie. I hear you dropped five grand."

"Who says so?"

"Joe Holland heard it at the city hall. They say the Baltimore bunch won five thousand berries off you."

"Don't believe all you hear, Pink."

Spilled milk had no interest for Eddie. At the moment he was not even attentive enough to see that Lawrence Barg, his confidential stakeholder, appeared to have gossiped.

He would have liked to ask Pink some intimate questions concerning Mary Ellen. The theory of stenographers in the Browley cellar had begun to look exceedingly thin; for the *Telegram* continued day after day to show an inside knowledge of Mr. Browley's campaign plans, and surely Berta kept the cellar locked now.

What was Mary Ellen's relationship with Cooger's ward leader, Holland? What was her attitude on local politics?

But Eddie repressed these inquiries. Suppose she was indeed an enemy agent? Was she not a girl, and Pink Flynn's girl, besides? Did a gentleman peach on a girl, even a hired one? Would not Mary Ellen lose her job if Browley knew?

Upon a kindred subject, however, he could well speak.

"Pink, there's talk of turning Mal Cooger out."

"There's talk of flying to the moon," jibed the youth who represented Mr. Cooger in the Gas House district.

"Have you ever thought it might be a good thing for you Second Warders to help can that grafter?"

"How come?"

"Look what he costs you."

"Hoot!" said Pink. "He's money in my pocket."

"How about that Paisley Street school-building job? Has to be done over. Eighty thousand wasted. Don't you fellows know you pay for his nonsense, same as the rest of us?"

Pink laughed.

"I'll do anything in the world for you, Eddie; rob a bank, beat up old Browley, anything you say. But don't ask me to knife Cooger. Didn't he back me with his money in the fight? 'Local pride,' he said. You heard him say it."

Local pride, indeed, Mr. Cooger had said on his remembered visit to the gymnasium. Strangely, Eddie had used the same words to Mr. Cooger's nephew only a few hours before they were spoken by Mr. Cooger. But coincidences never aroused suspicion in Eddie.

Reluctantly, as he drove homeward from the frost-tinted country, he abandoned his shy, wild idea of enlisting Pink Flynn's interest in Mr. Browley's candidacy.

AT dinner that evening Banker Doane reverted to a question which he had let alone for two weeks.

"Edwin, you have never said what you did with that five thousand."

"Which five thousand? Oh, yes. Didn't I tell you at the time?"

"You did not."

"I mentioned it right here at the table. Don't you recall?"

The stern eye of Doane Senior gleamed with virtuous malice.

"I know what you did with it, my son. You bet it on a prize fight and lost it."

"Now that you bring it up, father, I believe you're correct."

"Who got it?"

"Why, people in Baltimore, I understand."

"But you don't know who?"

Eddie remembered suddenly that Lawrence Barg had not yet handed him that promised statement.

"You don't know," Mr. Doane pursued, remorseless as a tiger. "I heard it at the club today. Is it true?"

"FATHER," Eddie replied modestly, "I —I hate to spoil a good story."

"After twenty-eight years of your society," said Mr. Doane, bitterly, "I begin to suspect that I am the father of a loony."

"Yes, it's too bad," Eddie sighed. "Do you suppose I inherited it from somewhere?"

With turtle slowness the conviction rose to his consciousness that only two men could have started the rumor heard by his father and Joe Holland. One was himself; the other the sporting oracle, Barg.

His feeling was only disappointment that Barg, who enjoyed the confidence of the Ashland sporting element, should have shown a talebearing streak.

But at the bank next morning, while inspecting the depositors' desks to make sure that the janitor had supplied them plentifully with deposit slips, he paused in the midst of his occupation, lifted his hand to his crown and said to himself: "I wonder who in Baltimore did get my five thousand."

At noon he deferred his hour of refreshment at the McKinley Club and went looking for his talkative confidant on the *Telegram* staff.

In front of the newspaper office, where big delivery trucks would load up as soon as the presses should begin their day's run, he beheld a resplendent new automobile; a pleasure car of the sort known as chummy; a car so virginal that the sunbeams of noonday linge ed caressingly upon its polished surface.

Lingered also around the shining machine a group of men: Kleutsch, the advertisement rustler; a pair of reporters, and Jasper Hoyt, the mile-walker who conducted an automobile agency as a side line. At the wheel of the new car sat Lawrence Barg. He seemed to be receiving felicitations.

Waiting until the group had broken up, Eddie approached the car.

"Ah, Barg, I'm in luck. Just looking for you."

"Oh, hello, Eddie."

Barg stepped hard on the starter.

"Half a minute, Larry. About that little statement of—you know——"

"Yes. Didn't you get it?" Barg looked surprise.

"No, I didn't."

"I mailed it the next day."

"That's odd."

"Sure. I sent it to you at the club."

The error, then, had been Eddie's. He never expected mail at the club, nor ever inquired for any.

"You might not care to have it coming in at the bank or your home, I figured," said Barg, suggestively.

"Certainly not. Thanks so much. Now

[Continued on page 124]

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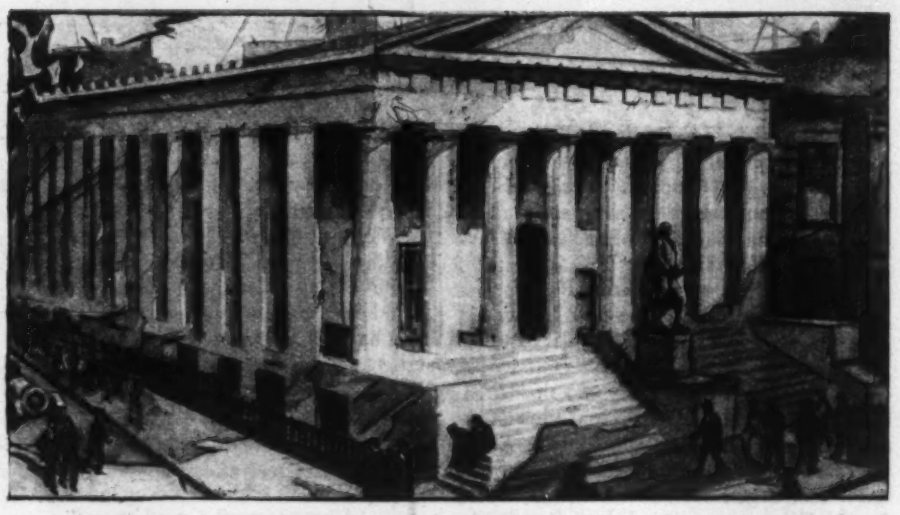

Reinvesting Your Funds

By Franklin K. Sprague

DURING the next several weeks the bond market will experience that stage of development which is termed in the financial district the "reinvestment demand." This means merely that investors who have maturities falling due at the end of the year, or who have interest coupons due at that time, begin to make plans for the purchase of securities. In some cases the purchaser buys securities in anticipation of the funds that are to become available; in other instances reinvestment is delayed until the actual money has been obtained.

It is doubtful whether this reinvesting power can be approximated in terms of actual dollars and cents. Interest coupons of many securities still fall due at the end of the year, although offerings of comparatively recent time have been somewhat more diversified as to interest date than older securities. At any rate, Wall Street always looks at this time for the manifestation of reinvestment demand, and end-of-the-year advances in bond prices, whether rightly or not, are attributed to this condition.

Reinvestment is generally associated with the large investor, but in the broader field of securities which exists now, wherein the public is more interested than ever before, there is a reinvestment problem for the man of small means just as there is for the large holder of securities. You can go about this problem in any one of several ways, but it is best to undertake it with the idea in mind either of strengthening the list of investments already owned, or of increasing the yield on a conservatively sound list.

In the case of the man who has an unstable and unbalanced list which he may not care to sell because of the depreciated price of his securities, it would be well to bolster his position by reinvesting interest in securities of the highest type, such as the underlying mortgages of the railroads and some of the industrial companies. This ultra-conservative degree of reinvesting would apply only in a relatively small number of cases and it would probably be difficult to persuade the holder of unstable securities that he should change his method. Taking the situation of the man with a diversified list of good securities, there is provided a method of reinvesting, and carrying on an investment plan, which affords a higher yield than is obtained in absolutely gilt-edge securities and yet does not jeopardize principal in the least degree, if we construe principal to mean savings which have been placed in such securities.

Let me tell you of the instance of one man—a conservative lawyer—who follows the method of which I am going to speak. That portion of his earnings which is in excess of his expenses he invests in gilt-edge securities, but the income from those securities he reinvests in that type of security which bond men understand by the designation of a "business man's investment." Let it be distinctly understood that this does not mean wildcat investments. It means pretty conservative investing, even in the broadest interpretation. Moreover, it is a plan which the small investor can follow just as well as the larger one. By so doing he can ultimately build up an investment structure which offers a higher yield than ordinary, but without such a degree of risk as sometimes accompanies abnormally high yield. Furthermore, the plan admits of wide latitude in its operation. It tends to bring diversification and makes a really tangible formula for the advantageous employment of funds. Naturally this plan cannot apply in the case of a person dependent upon investment for income, but is open to any one who is living within his salary or upon the return from his professional services.

THE position of the investment market at present is more or less bound up with the business outlook and the foreign situation. It is perhaps going too far to say that we can ignore foreign developments, particularly since once again there is the proposal for cancellation of inter-Allied indebtedness, which might tend to increase taxation, or at least hold taxation at its present high point for a number of years and thereby continue to place a premium on tax-exempt securities that is out of all proportion to their real investment position. That many of the gilt-edged securities in the tax-exempt class are higher in price now than they were in the pre-war days is evidence enough that the small investor should be wary in making his purchases so that he will not get securities at an unreasonably high price. Conservatism in buying even the best securities, is a policy to hold always uppermost. In brief, there is no reason for following the market up in the bidding for securities which are high-priced because of some particular influence.

Indications of recent weeks have shown that more and more foreign securities will be floated in the American market and they should be examined carefully, else the investor will be the loser. The markets that handled financing of this character in years

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gone by have lost their place. London is crippled; Paris is certainly not strong and Berlin is a disrupted money center. Thus, what could be more natural than that foreign financing should come to New York? There is no doubt that many foreign issues offer splendid opportunities for increasing yield, but there must be a fine sense of discrimination in making the purchases.

Lastly, the investor about to replace his funds in other securities must take cognizance of the business situation, particularly if his investment is in stocks, for through such ownership he becomes a partner in the business. There can be no doubt that the country has enjoyed a prosperous 1923, even though there has been a tapering off of business during the latter part of the year. But in considering securities of some of our newer industrial organizations we should not overlook the fact that they are unseasoned and such prosperity as they are enjoying may be built upon the unusual internal demand for goods which is a carry-over from the situation created by the war. Whether, when this demand is satisfied, these companies will be able to carry on should be investigated carefully by those who contemplate the purchase of securities.

I have endeavored to outline a few of the factors which the investor should take cognizance of in this reinvestment of his funds. I am not endeavoring to outline a plan of investment that would encompass specific securities. The chief point is the character of the securities; they may be railroad bonds or high-class railroad stocks; real-estate mortgage securities or foreign government bonds, to say nothing of the public utility field which presents such a wide range of possibility. There is this to be said, however, that securities should be examined individually and not be taken because of popularity of a particular type. The sooner the investor learns to examine intimately into a security the safer will be the financial structure which he builds up.

Questions and Answers

Q. Would you please send me a list of a few bonds paying 5 or 6 per cent that you consider a safe investment? Safety is my first consideration.

A. If you choose from the following list of bonds you will have a sound investment: Pocohontas Consolidated Collieries first 5s, due 1957, yielding 5.5 per cent; Detroit Edison 6s, due 1940, yielding 5.7 per cent; New York Central 5s, due 2013, yielding 5.3 per cent; Pere Marquette first 5s, due 1956, yielding 5.4 per cent; Carolina, Clinchfield & Ohio first 5s, due 1938, yielding 5.7 per cent; New York Telephone 6s, due 1941, yielding 5.5 per cent; General Electric debenture 5s, due 1952, yielding about 5 per cent.

Q. Please give me your opinion of Columbia Graphophone common stock. I bought 200 shares at 5. Would you advise holding it? What do you think of the company's future?

A. There is a long chance—a very long chance—of Columbia Graphophone stock getting near the price you paid for it. Your 200 shares are worth about $100, less commissions, and in reaching a decision try to banish the thought that your "investment" is $1,000. Several months ago you had a fund of $1,000 which you chose to use for speculation. Now you have about $100. It is simply a question of whether you wish to engage in another speculation with your reduced capital, taking the chance of your stock going to the vanishing point before it reaches your original buying price. The outlook for common stockholders is very dubious. If our answer seems short and evasive we are sorry, but this is really not a question that comes within the scope of McCLURE's investment service.

[Continued on page 122]

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Financial Questions and Answers

[Continued from page 121]

A. I shall be grateful for a word of advice. I have at present the following holdings in addition to real estate valued at some $10,000: General Motors 6 per cent debentures, bought at 70—$1,500; National Mortgage and Investment, 140 shares, common and preferred—$1,750; Dupont 7½ per cent—$1,000; Pacific Gas 6 per cent 1941, Series B—$500; Savings bank stock (local)—$6,500; United States 4¼—$1,000.

I am a middle-aged teacher—which, of course, means a small income—and safety is a primary consideration. Would you advise switches? For new funds, some $1,000, I have thought of North American preferred, 20 shares, and 5 shares of Bethlehem steel, 8 per cent cumulative preferred. Are these suitable or can you recommend more desirable securities?

A. The weak spot in your present list is the National Mortgage & Investment stock which cannot be regarded as suitable for a person of small means and limited income. Your plan to invest hereafter in preferred stocks has much to recommend it, but the scheme will work out right only if you are careful to take stocks of recognized investment value and supported by suitable earning power. North American preferred is suitable, but New York Telephone 6½ per cent preferred or Electric Bond & Share 6 per cent preferred will give you greater security.

Q. My son has given me a list of his investments and I am writing to ask you if you consider the choice he has made suitable as to security. He intends to hold these stocks as long-time investments. $3,000 Anaconda Copper Company 7 per cent, convertible, of 1953 at par; $3,000 International Telephone & Sales Engineering Company 6 per cent bonds, 1925, at 97; 10 shares Continental and Commercial National Bank, Capital 14 per cent, stock price $275, par $100; 50 shares Standard Oil Company of Indiana, price $50½; $4,000 U. S. Government 3rd Liberty Loan 4¼ per cent bonds, $98.86; $2,000 American Bond & Mortgage Company 6½ per cent bonds, par, due 1928; $2,000 American Bosch Magneto Company, 6 per cent Gold Notes, 1936, at $98.

A. Aside from the International Telephone Sales & Engineering bond there is nothing on this list that can be regarded as unsuitable for a young man who is building up a permanent investment. We judge from the title "convertible" attached to the Anaconda Copper bond that it is the debenture issue that your son holds. The debentures 7s are due 1938, whereas the first and consolidated 6s are due 1953. It goes almost without saying that his investment position would be more secure after the substitution of this 6 per cent bond for the debenture 7s. We believe, however, that even the debenture bond is preferable to the International Telephone Sales 6s.

Q. I should be glad to have some information as to the safety of two stocks I am now buying. I hold one $500 bond, Great Northern Railroad 7s, 1936; $500 in 1st Trust Notes; 5 shares Mack Trucks, 1st preferred. I have just ordered 5 shares each of Detroit Edison and Pure Oil 8 per cent convertible preferred. I would like to have your opinion on these two stocks.

A. The securities you now hold and the Detroit Edison stock just ordered are beyond criticism as investments for a man in your position—a man who feels competent to assume some risk for the sake of greater than normal return. We question, however, whether you would not be overrating your capacity for taking a risk, or underestimating the element of risk the stock contains, when you take Pure Oil preferred stock. As a gas company dabbling in the oil producing and refining business only as a small side line a few years ago, Pure Oil—formerly known as Ohio Cities Gas—was, to our way of thinking, less susceptible to the influences of periodical business disturbance than it is today, with its large interest in oil. You have probably been a close observer of the oil price war of the past few weeks and can appreciate what this means to the small producing and refining companies when the big, extensive corporations admit that they are selling at a loss. It means, for one thing, that a substantial write-off of inventories will be necessary. The Pure Oil Company's interest in the oil business gives the preferred stock more than the ordinary element of business risk. We advise you to look carefully into the situation before actually buying or holding this preferred stock.

Q. I hold the following bonds and stocks: 2 Montevideo 7 per cent; 2 Central Railway of Brazil 7 per cent; 2 Sharon Steel 8 per cent; 3 Japanese 4s; 6 Tokio 5s; 6 Common Doherty—City Service; 10 Sears-Roebuck common. Please tell me just what you think of these, and do you think I have them well distributed for safety and a good yield?

A. Your investments are fairly well distributed as far as the geographical location of the borrowers is concerned, but the list is not well supported by bonds making a near approach to commonly accepted standards of safety. We would describe the whole investment as one that should be held only by a professional or business man who is in a position to assume more than the ordinary risk, but certainly not suitable for a person who is in any way dependent upon the income from securities or who is building up a competence for old age.

The two Japanese bonds would stand out as the questionable points in a list of strong bonds, but here they shine by comparison. These bonds have already been affected by the earthquake in Japan and probably will be influenced further as the government goes out to borrow largely of foreign capital in furtherance of plans for reconstruction. However, if you are prompted to dispose of any of your bonds as a measure to raise the standard of your investment we should prefer to see you sacrifice the South American and the two industrial bonds first.

Q. Kindly advise if you consider Texas Company stock a good buy at the present quotation and state the rate of dividend in the past.

A. The Texas Company is one of the strongest independent units in the oil industry and is so situated financially as to be able to continue paying the present dividend rate in a period of temporary oil depression that would cripple weaker companies. As the result of a conservative dividend policy, the company has built up a large surplus that might be drawn upon in periods of inadequate earnings. The present rate of 12 per cent—on stock of $25 par value—has been in force since late in 1920. Dividends at varying rates have been paid in every year since incorporation of the company in 1902. While the present situation in the oil industry is unfavorable, we believe that the Texas Company stock is suitable for any one who is prepared to assume some element of business risk.

Q. Please give your rating on the following stocks: American Telephone and Telegraph; United States Steel preferred; Lehigh Valley Coal Sales. With $3,000 to invest would you advise placing the entire amount in one of these or dividing it between them?

A. A division of your available funds between American Telephone and Telegraph and United States Steel preferred would give you better diversification than an investment of the whole amount in one of the stocks. Your $3,000 will purchase ten shares of the American Telephone and Telegraph stock and fifteen shares of Steel preferred.

Q. Please tell me whether or not there is any speculation connected with Greenbaum Sons Investment Company, Chicago?

A. Greenbaum Sons Investment Company is an old established organization that has proved its conservatism over a long period of years. We consider the bonds a good investment.

Q. Please advise me regarding Standard Gas & Electric Company preferred stock. I am told the preferred stock pays 8 per cent. Is it to be reckoned as a good investment? Also what does cumulative mean as applied to stocks?

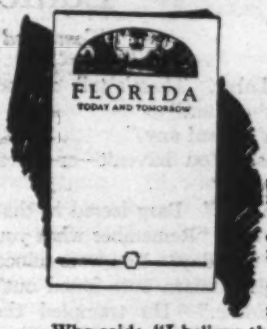
A. Standard Gas & Electric preferred stock is not entirely free of an element of business risk and this fact explains why you are able to get a return of more than 8 per cent on this issue. The word "cumulative" applies principally to preferred stocks. An 8 per cent cumulative preferred stock is entitled to 8 per cent a year. If for any reason the dividend or any part of it is not paid, the unpaid amount accumulates to the credit of the stock and nothing can be paid on the common stock until accumulations have been cleared up.

[All inquiries receive prompt and careful attention. Correspondence is treated as confidential and is answered by Mail. Questions relating to subjects of general interest will be published each month. Address, Financial Editor McCLURE'S *Magazine, 80 Lafayette St., New York City]*

Investment Literature

[If you do not care to order these booklets direct we shall be glad to have them sent to you. Kindly order by Number.]

1. S. W. Straus & Company, 565 Fifth Avenue, New York City, will be glad to send on request their new booklet "Charting Hidden Treasure." This booklet contains tables that will help you build an income.
2. The G. L. Miller Bond & Mortgage Company of Miami, Florida, are publishers of "The Ideal Investment," a financial book which describes the character of first mortgage real estate bonds, and indicates how high-grade bonds which are secured by real estate are protected against loss. A copy of this book will be mailed free and without obligation, upon request.
3. "How to Select Safe Bonds" is a booklet that has recently been published by George M. Forman & Company, 105 West Monroe Street, Chicago, Illinois. Send for this booklet.
4. "How to Build an Independent Income," a booklet, illustrated with charts and pictures, which shows how both large and small investors have much to gain by the compounding of 6½% and 7% interest on first mortgage investments in Washington, D. C. For copies write the F. H. Smith Company, Smith Bldg., 815 Fifteenth St., Washington, D. C.
5. "A Graphic Guide to Investments." This chart has been prepared for the guidance of investors in testing securities. It lists over 60 requirements of a good investment. This guide is distributed gratis by Clarence Hodson & Co., Inc., 135 Broadway, New York.



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Safe Investments for Little Sums
Safe Investments for Larger Sums
How to Choose a Broker
How to Send Money to a Broker
List of Sound Bonds
Six Per Cent and Safety
Bonds, Stocks and Mortgages
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Eddie Arrives

[Continued from page 119]

something else, Larry. There's talk around town about this matter."

"So? I haven't heard any."

"Yes, there is. You haven't—er—been indiscreet, have you?"

"Me? I hope not!" Barg leered in that knowing way of his. "Remember what you told me at lunch that day? You were ruined if a certain leading citizen ever found out! Well, trust me, Eddie." He trampled the starter again. "Going my way? No? Then so long."

Away buzzed the car, leaving Eddie gazing.

It was one of that class of clever little cars built in the hope of ruining Henry Ford and selling around $995. He had never heard that Barg possessed riches. Just before the fight, indeed, Barg had touched him for $100. Yet he seemed now to be the congratulated owner of a new automobile.

"Well, why not?" mused Eddie, as he went his way to the club.

The house steward said there was no letter for him, nor had any mail been forwarded to him in recent weeks.

At lunch Eddie meditated so hard that he knew not what he ate.

Manifestly, Barg had talked to the whispering world about the bet. Before that he had surely lied concerning those subterranean stenographers. Wherefore Eddie was fain to suspect him of lying about the statement which he said he had mailed in care of the club.

Why should a man lie about the simple matter of stating what he had done with a paltry five thousand dollars intrusted to him?

Having pondered that question, Eddie reflected further.

"If I raise a row over it, a certain leading citizen will learn that I've been betting again. Then I shall be ruined, as Friend Barg puts it. Now did Barg deliberately mean to suggest that?"

Once, in his younger days, Eddie had been outrageously blackmailed. He recalled that painful experience now, for some reason or other, as he thought of his stakeholder, the new car, and the accounting that had not been made.

Chapter VIII

PERSISTENTLY the hated *Telegram* revealed in advance the stratagems of the Browley campaign. Scarcely a day passed without a laugh for the Cooger crowd.

Daily Mr. Browley dashed the paper to the rug and cried aloud to know how his enemies got their information about him.

"You can't blame Eddie any more," said his daughter, thornily. "When are you going to ask his pardon? You insulted him, you know."

"Never! I don't want him around. He's a plunger. Worse yet, an easy mark. The whole town is laughing at him. He dropped his last cent at that prize fight, I hear. Forget him, my dear."

Berta was not the forgetting kind. Her eyelids grew redder with the passing days. On the afternoon when the Fourth Ward Women's Republican Club held their wonderful meeting at the Browley home she was too ill to help her mother receive and pour.

This meeting, which marked the opening of the women's crusade, marshalled almost enough enthusiasm to elect a pauper to the United States Senate. The honor of speaking the consummating word fell to Mrs. Harry B. Harrington, who said in part:

"We to whom the women of Ashland have looked for leadership in tamer times must not shirk our duty now, nay, though it be a sordid duty. In the battlefield of politics, ladies, in the bivouac of public life, we must not hang back and let unintelligent women seize the helm. We must be heroines in the strife."

What the *Telegram* did to that!

The pampered, idle-rich dolls of the Fourth Ward are magnanimously descending from their flowery beds of ease to teach citizenship to the working women, the level-headed, practical-minded wives, mothers and daughters of the so-called slums.

Have those queenly beings voted any longer than their humble Second Ward sisters? Do they know any more about the ballot or anything else on earth, except blowing smoke rings, perhaps, and painting their noses?

"We opine," the *Telegram* concluded, "that the Cooger Women's League will take care of these highborn visitors good and plenty, and the reception won't be a pink tea."

The Cooger Women's League? Mrs. Browley looked in the new telephone book and discovered that the Cooger women actually had a headquarters, in River Street.

Otto, the Browley chauffeur, drove thither to reconnoiter. He brought back a letterhead, filched from the secretary's desk. Printed across the top of the page and down the side were names in profusion. Nobody that anybody knew: Mrs. Brian O'Boyle, Mrs. August Grossmeier, Mrs. Michael Flynn, Mrs. I. Levinski, Mrs. Guiseppe Tomalino—— And committees, if you please: Finance, ways and means, social, auditing. To Mrs. Browley it seemed upstartish, somehow.

At supper time Harry B. Harrington phoned to announce that Mrs. Harrington had withdrawn from public life in consequence of a collision between her intellectual forehead and a ripe tomato at a mothers' meeting in River Street.

Mrs. Browley herself had planned to go spellbinding this evening. She had already laid out her sealskin coat and a pair of white kid gloves for the ordeal. After Harrington's message she felt suddenly unequal to the strain of venturing afield after votes. Political charity began at home. She would do her campaigning this evening in her own kitchen; she would practice on Mary Ellen, who had thus far shown no interest whatsoever in the tremendous struggle going on under her nose.

She found the indifferent creature washing up the supper things.

"Mary Ellen, you are a voter now, I presume you know."

"So I'm told, ma'am."

"It is a grave responsibility, Mary Ellen. Have you thought about the election next Tuesday?"

"Yes, ma'am; and I hear the master hasn't got the chance a snowball would have in my gas oven."

"Mary Ellen!"

"It's the truth, ma'am, and you oughta

hear it. Kummel in a walk is the talk in my part of town."

"Do your people understand the great issue, Mary Ellen? Do they know that Mr. Browley represents the Home?"

"They hardly even heard of him, ma'am—and we got quite a few homes down there, at that." There was calm triumph in Mary's smile. "The only issue ever with us, ma'am, is Mal Cooger, the People's Friend. If the master wanted to be mayor he shoulda got Mr. Cooger to put him up. It's a shame he has to be murdered like he will be next Tuesday. He will be lucky to carry a blessed district outside his own ward."

The glibness of this dishwasher!

"You see, ma'am, you highbrows got no organization. All you got is a lot of gentlemen speakers with arguments. You gotta organize, ma'am. You gotta organize better'n Mal Cooger——"

The pantry door flew open, admitting Mr. Browley. He had a sheet of paper in his hand; the letterhead of the Cooger Women's League.

"Mary Ellen, your last name."

"Shandon, sir; didn't you know?"

He thrust the paper under his wife's eyes. She read: *Miss Mary E. Shandon, Chairman of Publicity.*

Mary Ellen ceased washing the dishes. Calmly she rinsed and dried her round arms and rolled down her sleeves.

"So!" the candidate exploded. "So you are the leak! You are little Sharp Ears who runs to the *Telegram* with my private affairs!"

"With your public affairs, maybe, sir."

"You, my servant, have spied on me in my own house!"

She held up her head, unabashed.

"If you talk your silly campaign right out before me, a member of the Cooger organization, that owes a duty to my party, right or wrong, as I've heard you say everybody does many's the time, sir, whose fault is it but your own?"

"Ungrateful girl!" Mrs. Browley chided. 'After the silk dress I gave you!"

Her cheeks flamed at that.

"I've never worn it, ma'am, nor really taken it, although it hangs in my closet where you put it. Anyhow, a silk dress is nothing to the kindness Mr. Cooger has shown me and my people in times past. And when a lot of rich men scheme to drag him down in disgrace and put him in prison, do you think I won't do all in my power to stop them?"

"Put him in prison, girl!" Browley exclaimed. "What do you mean?"

"I guess you don't know, sir! And you saying only last night at supper how he ought'a be there! But you won't send him now, because you'll never be elected mayor in the world!" Tears welled up in the defiant eyes. "I'm sorry I had to snoop on you all. But I would do it again——I'll pack my things now and go."

She was weeping when she reached her Aunt Kate's house down by the river. She wept all night, as her sister Louise could testify.

Next day the *Telegram* said that Mr. Browley had discharged a housemaid for supporting the party of her choice.

When Mary Ellen read the item she told her Uncle Joe Holland frankly what she thought of his taste in publicity.

WITH a raw maid in Mary Ellen's place, and with election day drawing near, the Browley home became as joyless as a jail. The Browleys knew that their cause was precisely as hopeless as Mary Ellen had said.

One by one, the good women who had set forth to carry the light into the dark districts cancelled their speaking dates. How shall a lady compete on a soap box against a two-fisted beldame who harangues the mob in its own jargon? Of what avail are virtuous homilies in the face of hostile vegetables?

Browley's friends, meeting him in the street, spoke to him with solemn pity, as if he suffered from some ultimately fatal ailment. The *Bee*, his own paper, admitted that he stood no show.

Cooger's man Kummel felt that all was over but the noise. He allowed the *Telegram* to announce who his directors of public safety and public works would be.

Chapter IX

"HO! Edwin! Wanted on the phone!" Doane Senior called up the stairs of his home, at the twilight hour of the first Sunday in November.

Drowsily Eddie responded. In blue-velvet house coat and slippers to match, he descended to take the call.

Uproariously he dashed out of the house half a minute thereafter and drove away in his red roadster, as if going to a fire. A lonely young woman had telephoned that her father was speaking on Good Government and Righteousness in a church at the extreme southern end of town, and wouldn't Eddie take her out for a little air?

"Which way?" he asked, arranging the robes around her as she snuggled down beside him.

"North," said Berta. "Big Silly," she added, "you're in your slippers."

"No matter," he chirped. "Soon dark."

It pleased her to regard the fact of the slippers as a sign that the paternal ice had not cooled his devotion.

To be with him gave her a sense of relief from what she had been having at home. He seemed unaware that the next day but one was elect on day. He spoke of pugilism, not politics. He brooded still over the defeat of his friend Pink Flynn.

"Father says you lost a lot of money," she remarked.

He changed the subject instantly.

"How's Mary Ellen? Can't reach her by phone any more. Get stern parent or mama."

It came out that Mary Ellen had traitorously quit the Browleys and gone to help elect their enemy Kummel; also that she was the disloyalest servant that ever had crept into a worthy family's confidence. She was to blame for the *Telegram* stories and the heartache they had caused.

"Imagine it!" said Berta.

Eddie had already imagined it.

"She saw the fight," he remarked. "Broke into Pink's dressing room afterward. Guess they're engaged. She made me think of you, Bertie, kissing him and crying over him the way she did."

"When have I ever cried over you?"

"Well, anyway"—he brought the car to a stop under a convenient willow tree by the roadside—"I've known you to do the other."

It being dark now, she did the other.

"Encore!" he begged, blissfully.

Having warmed their hearts with a chaste salute thrice or perhaps six times repeated,

[Continued on page 126]

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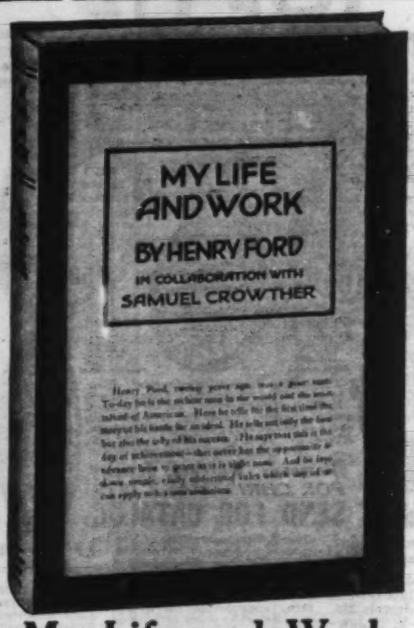

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In Collaboration with Samuel Crowther

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Three Principles of Success

III. STARTING THE REAL BUSINESS
Principles Universal

IV. THE SECRET OF MANUFACTURING
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Eddie Arrives

[Continued from page 125]

they settled down as soberly as a married pair to discuss their situation.

Academically Berta stated the question before them. Should they elope at once, or should they wait until Mr. Browley should be gathered to his fathers? Further, had Eddie money enough left to support them, after his recent costly speculations in professional baseball teams, prize fighters and what not?

"Can always sell the little old car," he suggested. "Last us a month, with economy."

There was the baseball park, too. Somebody with money could come along one day and take it off his hands.

AS they reveled in their perplexities, a car whizzed past them in the dark, heading away from the city.

Berta grasped his arm.

"Did you see?"

"No. What?"

"A girl in that car was fighting the driver."

Back from the speeding car came a girl's cries for help, faint and fainter as the tail light dimmed in the distance.

"Must go see," Eddie muttered, starting the engine. "Go anywhere, see a fight."

The red roadster took up the trail of the red lamp. In a mile it had crept up so close behind that its headlights showed the first car plainly—a gleaming new car, one of the clever chummy kind that Lawrence Barg was driving in those days.

They heard no screams now, nothing but the buzz of the tires, the rush of the wind.

At the flash of the lights behind, the driver in the lead increased speed. The roadster hung on easily. The first car veered into a narrow side road. Eddie followed. The red lamp ahead winked out, then the headlights. Eddie's lenses kept the fugitive in sight; lit the way for both.

So they traveled until the driver in advance slowed and halted at the edge of the way, as if to be rid of the pursuer by letting him pass. Cutting by, Eddie swung his wheel over and brought the roadster to a stand across the path of the waiting car, with its nose overhanging the roadside ditch.

"Having trouble with your lights?" he hailed, like a good Samaritan.

"What the devil you stopping there for?" an angry voice retorted.

The extinguished headlights came on, flooding the roadster with their glare. It was thus impossible to see what happened behind the lamps. But the sounds from the little car were eloquent; the angry voice cursing and pleading at once; another voice gasping frantically, "Let me go, I tell you!"

Out of the dark a disheveled girl stumbled into the glow of the lamps and flung herself weeping upon the door at Berta's side.

"Take me home, please," she begged, as Berta lifted her in.

She buried her head on a kindly little shoulder and moaned in fear and misery.

"I think he's drunk or crazy, or both," she said.

"There, dearie," Berta comforted. "We will take you home. Sure we will. Look, Eddie, her coat sleeve is torn off. And just a little girl——"

Eddie was not there to hear. He had leaped out on his own side and run back into the darkness. She heard his voice. It sounded sharp for Eddie's.

"That you, Barg?"

The headlights had begun to back away.

"Hold on a minute!"

Then there was the thud of blows, and the angry voice crying, "Let go that wheel, you fool!"

Slowly the lights lifted their shining faces toward the treetops as the backing car sidled off the road and sank a rear wheel deep in the ditch.

Berta could see better now. She saw her young man grapple with the driver of the car, drag him out upon the road and go to earth with him. The quivering girl in her arms lifted her head to watch.

They saw the struggling pair lie still at last and heard Eddie sing out:

"Bertie, my pliers, please. In the door pocket."

She left her charge among the robes and did his bidding. She found him kneeling on the other man's stomach.

"Thanks so much," he panted, when she had placed the asked-for tool in his free hand. "Run away now."

"I won't," she declared.

"Go on back to the car, please."

Marveling, she obeyed. When before had Eddie ever been so masterful!

There followed minutes of mumbling talk that meant nothing to her. The sudden yell that went screeching and echoing through the lonely woods was more understandable. It was a yell of agony.

"Eddie!"

"Hush up!"

He was still alive, then. The yell had been the other man's.

It was fearful to sit there in the cold and listen to the murmur of truculent voices down the road.

"I hope," the strange girl breathed, almost as a prayer, "I hope he kills him."

"I hope he isn't killed," thought Berta, quite as fervently.

Aloud she called his name again.

"Half a mo," he answered, blithely.

Soon he came, dusting his hands, his clothing, while the beaten adversary slunk toward the shadows of the ditched car.

"Sorry keep ladies waitin'," Eddie apologized, climbing in. "Business before pleasure, what?"

As the roadster leaped away, he burst into jubilant song.

When a woman is mystified by a man's exuberance she is disposed to criticize.

"Eddie Doane."

"Duchess?"

"What have you got on under your overcoat?"

She had seen him plainly as he came from the combat.

"Clothes 'n' things, my dear."

"You are out here in the woods miles from town in a blue-velvet smoking jacket."

"And a red car!" he groaned, fastidiously.

"And driving in your stocking feet!"

"Shoes are high, ma'am. When a poor man is saving up to go and get married he's gotta cut out extravagance. Simply gotta!"

The fact is that he had left his slippers on the field of battle.

'Eddie."

"Love?"

"Stop singing and tell me why you wanted the pliers."

"The pliers," he answered, "is mightier than the liars."

For a while then, driving along, he was pensive.

"Bertie, are you really keen for your office-hunting dad to land this mayor job?"

Of course she was. Her father had never wanted a thing more earnestly in his life. He knew now that his friends and his enemies, between them, had made him a town joke.

"He used to be somebody, when he let politics alone," she sighed. "Now he will be just poor old Browley who thought he could whip the machine."

They had reached town and swung into High Street. Eddie turned to the silent girl in Berta's arms.

"Where shall we take you?" he asked gently.

"Down River Street," she answered.

She was only a flapper, the street lamps showed; a pretty one, for all her disarray.

"Folks live there?"

"Yes, sir."

"Folks make a big fuss, maybe, you coming in all scared and all?"

Fresh tears rose in her eyes.

"Can't we make it easy for her, somehow?" he asked Berta. "We can't just deliver her and dash away, can we?"

"We must see her through," said Berta. "We know she fought him like a good one."

Thus it happened that the red roadster stood that night in front of the old-fashioned house that sheltered Big Joe Holland.

Chapter X

Up on the hill, in the Fourth Ward, J. Barr Browley and Banker Doane, at opposite ends of a telephone wire, were clinched in a conversation that threatened to burn out the safety fuses.

The candidate and his lady had come home from preaching politics as a religious duty to an audience of nineteen of the inhabitants of the southern end of town. They had found their house even more nearly empty than the church had been, their willful daughter having vanished.

Over the phone Mr. Browley accused Mr. Doane of being the father of a kidnaper. The banker countered with words not tending to mollify. If an abduction had indeed occurred, his son had been the innocent victim. Edwin had been lured from his happy home that evening by a telephone message from a young woman.

Down in the river ward, in the sitting room of Big Joe Holland's house, the missing pair had forgotten the duty they owed their anxious parents. Tempestuous scenes had just then taken place in that room, and the air trembled with rumblings of further thunder.

Big Joe reclined in his armchair in partial collapse, as one who has lately taken a jolt in the solar plexus. Morosely he listened to his women-folk. Never had he supposed them capable of such vehemence as theirs this night.

When Aunt Kate, indignant to the point of tears, ran out of breath, Mary Ellen went in for her; and Mary was a Diana roused to a pitch of scorn almost sublime.

Pink Flynn, close by, shared the fury of the storm with him and bowed his head in humiliation. He had heard news in that hour that hurt him worse than the beating he had had from Baltimore Blake.

Berta, observing all as a noncombatant, pitied him; but more she admired her own young man, striding to and fro in the middle of the picture, passionately summing up for the prosecution.

Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed so wonderfully as Eddie. A damp towel swathed our hero's head—for the detestable Lawrence Barg had somewhat scaled him with a wrench. A velvet smoking jacket of bright blue clothed his manly body. One leg of his trousers was ripped from ankle to knee and flapped revealingly as he walked. His feet were encased in a pair of Mr. Holland's mighty shoes.

Above, Eddie resembled Mustapha Kemal Pasha. Below, Charlie Chaplin. In his hand he flourished a gleaming pair of steel pliers.

"And that's your great good friend Mal Cooger," he declaimed to Pink Flynn. "That's your grand patron! He comes to see you train. Tells you he means to back you in the fight for your life. Then he puts his money on a bruiser from Baltimore. When you take the count, he counts four thousand dollars for himself and one thousand for his dear nephew."

Here Mary Ellen offered comment.

"The Judas! He bet on Pink to lose! Pink, his own district man! And me playing the spy in the best place I ever had, and losing it besides, to help him elect his pig Kummel! And your own dear old mother, Pink, serving hot dogs and ice cream to the crowd at headquarters night after night and washing up after 'em, working her head off for the man that bet against you, when she oughta be home in her bed!"

Eddie silenced her with a gesture and took up the tale. He was wonderful tonight, Berta thought.

"I've told you the facts. You can't get around 'em. At first I thought Barg had just plain robbed me, knowing I couldn't make a howl without getting in Dutch with Miss Browley's father. But there were Cooger's bank deposits. Third day after the fight, twenty-seven hundred; next day, thirteen hundred. End of the week Barg buys a thousand-dollar car. Jasper Hoyt, who sold it to him, tells me he paid cash for it. Add it all up. Five thousand smackers!

"Barg says the idea was his. His uncle came in with him. He showed his uncle there wasn't a chance in fifty of losing. He came to me. Showed me the moral effect such a bet would have on the Baltimore gorilla. I almost believed it was my own idea. I put up the money. They kept it in the family. If Barg denies it tomorrow, I'll pinch his thumb again." Eddie gazed fondly upon the pliers. "Useful tool to wring explanations out of crooks."

"S'pose I'd ha' won," Pink suggested.

"Then Barg could have given me back my money and told me he hadn't been able to place it. But he says Cooger would have paid. All right, give your beloved boss the benefit of the doubt. The fact remains that he made four thousand on your losing. His own nephew says so."

"Yes," cried Aunt Kate, "and his own nephew drags our little girl miles into the country and scares her half to death! Your niece, Joe Holland; the child I raised like my own. And you sit there and say you don't see what anybody can do about it!"

[Continued on page 128]

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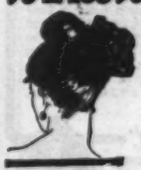

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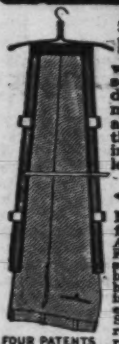

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Editor—S. S. McClure, 80 Lafayette Street, New York City.

Managing Editor—Kenneth W. Payne, 80 Lafayette Street, New York City.

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Sworn to and subscribed to before me this 28th day of September, 1923.

Elmer S. Chatfield,
Notary Public of Kings County, 66
Certificate filed in New York County 68
(My commission expires March 30th, 1924.)

Eddie Arrives

[Continued from page 127]

"Hark!" warned Mary Ellen, very solemn.

They could hear Louise sobbing in her room above.

"Nothing to do!" Aunt Kate stormed. "If I was a great big lummox that called himself a man, don't you suppose I would think of something to do?"

"Aw, hold your noise!" growled Big Joe. "Pink and me are going to call on Mal Cooger first thing in the morning, ain't we?"

"Are you, Pink?" asked Mary Ellen, eagerly.

The heartsick fighter looked up at his friend in the blue house coat.

"We are," he answered grimly. "And Eddie Doane is going along with us."

"Be at the bank at nine," said Eddie, most businesslike. He pocketed the pliers, stepped out of Mr. Holland's shoes and reached for his overcoat. "Berta, my dear, shall we now—er—arise and go unto stern parent's house?"

"Not till I've phoned," replied Miss Browley, promptly. "You have a telephone, Mrs. Holland, I believe?"

Mary Ellen blushed. Aunt Kate bustled to the instrument.

"Indeed we have, dearie; and you can use it all night, or anything else we own, bless your heart!"

Chapter XI

ARE bosses divinely appointed? Are not all men subject to the laws of survival, the Mal Coogers no less than the humblest ward worker? Because a man is a good lieutenant, shall he abstain from aspiring to the captaincy? These grave questions occupied the mind of Big Joe Holland through most of the night.

Interwoven with them were certain domestic inquiries propounded by Aunt Kate and Mary Ellen. For example: Did he expect ever to be happy again in his home until he had avenged Louise and Pink for the wrongs they had suffered at the hands of the tribe of Cooger?

Still burdened with these problems, he went next morning to keep his appointment at Eddie's father's bank. He had left Pink Flynn behind, contrary to plan. He hoped to dissuade Eddie Doane also from attending the projected meeting with Mr. Cooger. It was a fearful thing to break openly with the boss. Perhaps it could be avoided.

Eddie let him in at the side door. Looking back through the new glass panel, Mr. Holland observed Aunt Kate and Mary Ellen on guard, like suffrage pickets, on the opposite side of Vernon Street. His courage wilted.

"I know what you've got in mind," he said, when seated beside Eddie's desk. "And I'm with you. But I don't think we oughta go jump on Cooger in a crowd."

To his surprise, Eddie agreed with him.

"I think, myself, Mr. Holland, you'd better see him alone. You can get a confession out of him where he would lie to Pink and me. Question is, can I trust you?"

The ward leader shrugged his great shoulders in a manner signifying helplessness.

"I ain't anything *but* trustable this morning," he said sadly. 'Can I stop Pink and his gang in the Cooger A. C., and that wild woman Mary Ellen and her friends in the Cooger Women's League? Ain't the two of 'em been out through the ward since daybreak undermining me right and left? And do you think it's going to be a snap for me to live in the same world with my wife unless I play square with you?" Mr. Holland lifted his hat and mopped his damp brow with his coat sleeve. "Will I crash with Cooger when I can grab a parachute? Never on your life!" He hitched his chair closer. "What I'd kind of like to know first, though, is where do I stand with Browley?"

Eddie's smile was almost as bland as the famous smile of Mr. Cooger.

"At half-past one this morning," spoke our young man, "Mr. Browley was led to acknowledge himself a political flivver. Family pressure, you know, and so forth."

"Family pressure!" Holland echoed huskily. "Don't I know?"

"He then invited me to become his political manager for as long as I can make good. So hadn't you better ask where you stand with me?"

It is a pity the appreciative Berta and the doubting Mr. Doane could not have seen their Eddie at that moment, resting his clasped hands calmly on the desk blotter, watching the play of thought in the anxious leader's face.

"Banking is rather cramping," he continued. "I'd like to try running a city in the interest of the citizens. Scientific experiment, and all that. As Mr. Browley's director of public safety the next four years I shall have the police and the fire departments. Also, I shall control the bureau of public works through an engineer I expect to hire—chap I knew in college. Ought to build up a pretty fair machine of my own in four years, don't you think?"

"My gosh! Yes," breathed Big Joe.

"Any help you can give me, Mr. Holland, will be entered to your credit on the books of Browley, Doane & Co. You can save us a lot of work in your ward if you care to."

"Do you think I don't care to!"

They shook hands on it.

Shadowed openly and relentlessly by Aunt Kate and Mary Ellen, Mr. Holland crossed High Street tc the Rittendorf Block and was closeted there with Malcomb Cooger for half an hour.

Details of the interview are lacking. Its general drift, however, is known.

Mr. Holland approached Mr. Cooger as a worried friend. Mr. Cooger denied instantly that he had won money from young Doane. Confronted with the testimony of his nephew, he adopted the bullying pose until reminded that Mr. Holland had come to warn, not to be browbeaten.

Thereupon Mr. Cooger smilingly confessed his error of judgment and sought to make a joke of it. Local pride, he said, had moved him to keep Eddie's money in Ashland. Informed that the affair was too serious for jesting, and that the Second Ward already seethed with revolt, he besought Mr. Holland to see if young Doane would receive his money back and call the incident closed.

"I'll do what I can," Big Joe agreed, gloomily. "But you've spilled the beans bad. You've gotta do a lot of gathering up in the next twenty-four hours."

Having done his duty by the boss and put himself on record as a fellow victim of Mr.

Cooger's in the impending disaster, Mr. Holland returned to his domicile, reported to Eddie Doane by telephone and to his militant women-folk in person, and retired for the remainder of the day to his garden in the rear.

Philosophically, as he straightened up his garden, he readjusted his political world. Casting a long look into the future, he could perceive continued emolument for himself. Through Aunt Kate, who swayed Mary Ellen, who controlled Pink Flynn, who stood ace-high with Eddie Doane, who was Mr. Browley's mentor, he could still dominate patronage in the Bloody Second; could still serve as chief labor agent for the city government. The overturn would leave his political credit unimpaired.

Just one thing was lacking to complete his contentment with the situation; and when Aunt Kate, in calling him in to his dinner, employed the sweetest and kindliest of tones to her fifty-eight-year-old bridegroom, he had nothing more to desire.

Chapter XII

At ten o'clock on election day a delegation from the Cooger Women's League waited upon Mr. Malcomb Cooger in his law offices in the Rittendorf Block. Suave, ingenuous, dapper, he greeted them cordially, like the good fellow he was, and inquired how the vote was getting out.

They answered that the voting was unprecedentedly slow. Before exercising the franchise, numbers of people wished to know whether or not Mr. Cooger had laid money on a total stranger in the late unpleasantness in the First Regiment Armory.

"Why we ask," spoke the leader of the committee, Mrs. August Grossmeier, who was a six-footer, "is that in the *Telegram* newspaper last night was a piece saying you were being lied about, though it didn't say what the lies was."

"We want to be fair to you, Mr. Cooger," put in little Mrs. I. Levinsky. "But we also want justice done to our friend and neighbor, Mrs. Flynn, that her boy got himself licked in that fight."

"So you have heard that fool yarn, have you?" said Mr. Cooger briskly. "Just bring me the man that started it. That's all the answer you girls need, isn't it?"

They brought forward Mary Ellen, haggard from intense political activity; her red hair tumbled, her eyes burning with the eternal fires of the truthful stars.

"Here's the man that started it," they told the boss.

"You denied it in the *Telegram*, sir," said she. "We couldn't see your face then. Will you deny it here and now to these ladies, please?"

For half an instant his shoe-button eyes evaded her steady gaze.

"Mr. Cooger, sir, you oughta be in state prison!" she cried. "And when they dig you out from under the landslide, I'll tell you some more that I think of you. Come on, women!"

At noon the fire department was called upon to rescue three loyal Cooger workers from Canal Lock Number Twelve, into whose watery depths a mob of their neighbors had hurled them.

At two o'clock the *Bee* and the *Telegram* came out with election extras and said that the early voting indicated a sweeping victory for the Cooger machine. This in spite of the perceptible fact that River Street in front of the polling places was paved yellow with cast-off Cooger buttons.

All through the Second Ward, and over in the First, and down in the Third, people discussed betting as a vice in a political boss. Quite all right it was with them if Mal Cooger, through his friends, purchased real estate about to be desired for public improvements, thus betting that the tax-burdened citizens would buy the property from him at a much greater price than he paid for it some months before.

But for him to wager that a loyal worker of his, a friend and hero of theirs should lose a championship boxing bout was another sort of gamble. It savored to them of profiteering. There was a feeling that Mr. Cooger's behavior in this matter had scarcely been ethical.

At supper time in the cheerless home of J. Barr Browley the phone bell sounded. Berta sprang to answer.

"It's Mary Ellen, dad. She's phoning us for Eddie. She says——"

"Get it over quick!" moaned the jaded candidate. He had not put five cents' worth of faith in the desperate miracle which his daughter and her wild young man had promised.

"She says you have carried the—the what, Mary Ellen?—the Gas House district of the Second Ward by three votes to one. You will have nine hundred plurality in that ward, and five districts in the First, and maybe half in the Third. Dad! She says you're elected! And to give you her kind regards!" Berta ended jubilantly.

At midnight three brass bands blared at the moon that swam gloriously above the Browley residence. They played three separate tunes in as many keys, but were in harmony in one particular, namely, that they all were—or had recently been—Cooger bands. You could read it in large letters on the bass drums.

While the musicians murdered the sleep of the select neighborhood, and the cohorts that had once been Cooger's trampled the Browley bluegrass and danced the deck paint off the Browley piazzas, the Browley family, looking somewhat dizzy, received in the parlors.

As master of ceremonies, Eddie Doane officiated brilliantly, informing one and all what a politician his Grandfather Jordan, formerly Minister to Portuguay, had been in Grover Cleveland's day.

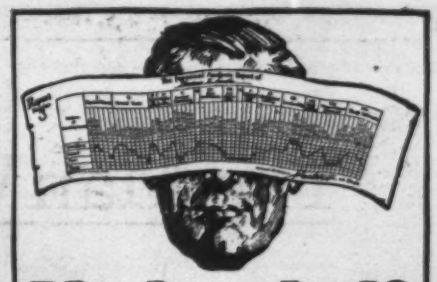
BROAD grins were worn by all there, notably by Mary Ellen, who seemed to have taken the Browleys into her capable charge as in the happy days of her servanthood. In a smart business suit, such as women politicians affect, she was rather a pippin.

Along the receiving line came a red-headed, level-eyed young man with a split lip, newly-healed. He seemed to be a distinguished young man, for he had the daughter of the house for his special escort, and he advanced amid tumultuous and prolonged cheering.

"Pink, meet His Honor, the new mayor," spoke Eddie, in the grand manner. "Mr. Mayor, meet our new Assistant Director of Public Safety, Michael Patrick Flynn, of the Second Ward."

Mr. Browley extended the right hand of fellowship. He beamed upon the erstwhile scorned pugilist.

"Mr. Flynn," said he, "I am proud to know you."



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